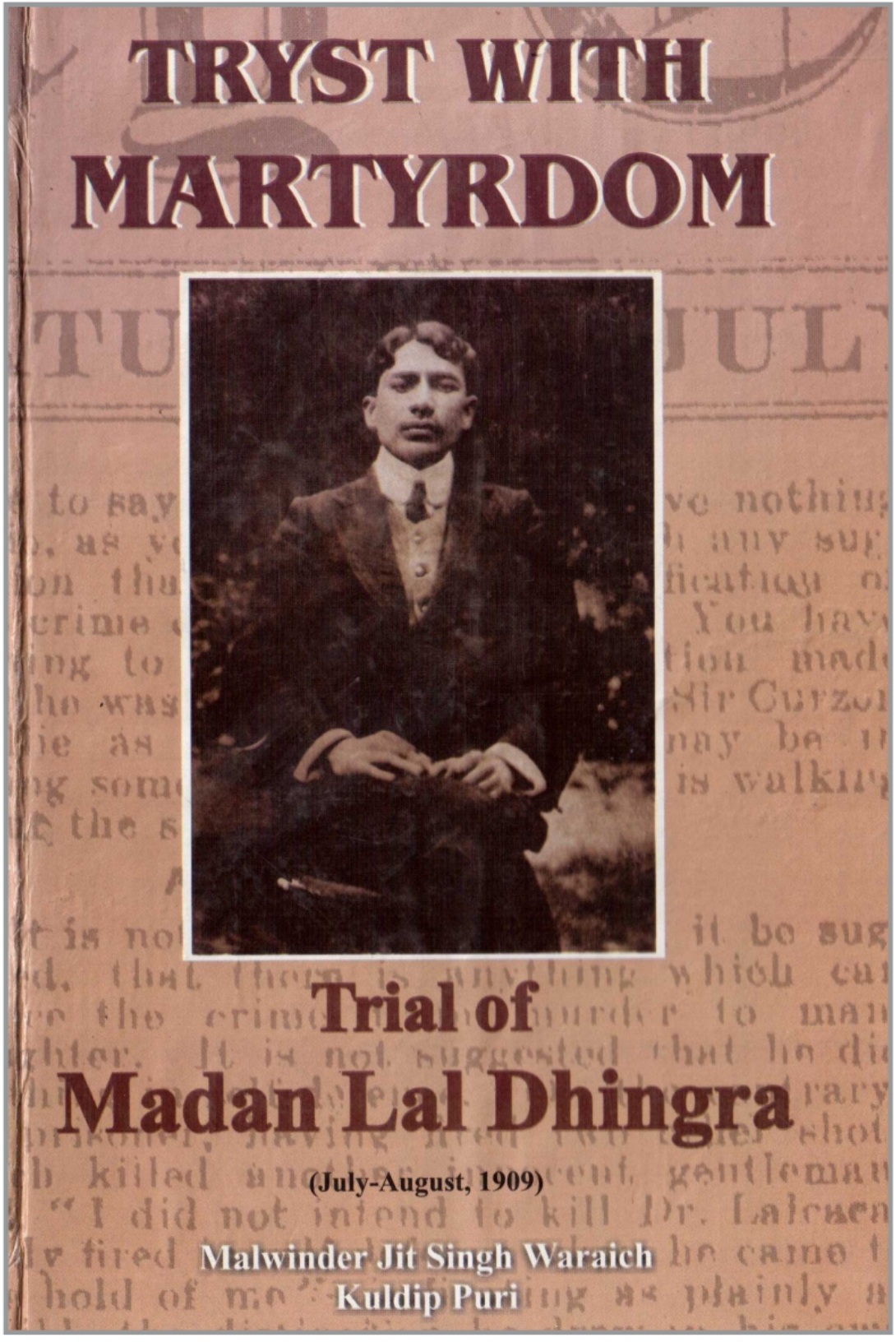

TRYST WITH MARTYRDOM

Madan Lal Dhingra was born on February 8, 1883 in a very rich family of Amritsar, Punjab. His father Dr. Sahib Ditta Dhingra faithfully served the British Empire as a doctor and retired with honour as Civil Surgeon. Dhingra family was one among the most loyal subjects of the British Raj. Madan Lal arrived at London in July 1906 to study Engineering, joined the college in October 1906 and attended classes till June 30, 1909. He was a regular visitor at India House, an institution that emerged as a centre of patriotic activities of all those who were convinced that British rule over India was unjust and should end.

On July 1, 1909, he killed Sir Gurzon Wylie, an important English officer related to Indian affairs, at an annual 'at home' of Pro-British Indian Association. Dhingra faced the trial with stoic calm of a karamyogi and became a role model for all Indian revolutionaries. On July 10, 1909 he made a famous statement before the court that explained the raison'detre of his act. He challenged the authority of British law courts to try him. Madan Lal became first martyr executed outside India when he was hanged on August 17, 1909 in a British Jail.

TRYST WITH MARTYRDOM

TRIAL OF
MADAN LAL DHINGRA
(Born: 8 Feb. 1883, Martyred: 17 Aug. 1909)

Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich
Kuldip Puri

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Tryst with Martyrdom: trial of Madan Lal Dhingra
by Prof. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, Dr. Kuldip Puri

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The memory of countless patriots who 'gave us back the pride of our manhood'

"Such singularly exceptional rebels who challenge the power that be, and jump into the flames of their wrath, forget about their own well-being, while beautifying the world at large, and the human society moves forward by virtue of their mortification."

— Bhagat Singh

"Woh jo tareek rahon mein marey gaye"

— Faiz Ahmed Faiz

From the early years of the twentieth century, groups of Indians established centres for revolutionary activities in Europe, America and Asia. They carried on propaganda for India's independence among Indians living abroad and mobilized them for revolutionary operations. They maintained contacts with revolutionary groups in India and supplied them with revolutionary literature and even arms. One of the earliest Indian revolutionaries outside India was Shyamaji Krishnavarma in London. He published a nationalist journal, the *Indian Sociologist*, and established the 'India House', a hostel for Indian students. The hostel became the centre for a revolutionary group which included V.D. Savarkar, a founder of the Abhinava Bharat Society in Maharashtra. Savarkar established contacts with the Irish revolutionary organization Sinn Fein. In 1911 he was sentenced to transportation for life. Madan Lal Dhingra, a member of this group, assassinated Curzon-Wyllie, an official of the India Office, in 1909 and was executed. During 1910-1914, Paris became the most important centre of Indian revolutionaries in Europe. Madame Cama, who brought out the journal *Bande Mataram*, S.R. Rana and many others, had already been active there. They established contacts with socialists in France and elsewhere. Madame Cama had also participated in the Congress of the Second International at Stuttgart in 1907. When the First World War broke out, Cama and Rana were interned in France, and Krishnavarma moved to Geneva. Indian revolutionaries tried to secure the help of Turkey and Germany, Britain's enemies in the War, for overthrowing the British rule. Berlin became their most important centre in Europe. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, who published the *Talwar*, was joined by Bhupendranath Dutt, Barkatulla, Champakaraman Pillai and others, and the 'Berlin Committee' was formed. In the meantime, a powerful organization of Indian revolutionaries had been formed in North America. This, and the 'Berlin Committee', taking advantage of the War, tried to organize anti-British uprisings in India during the War.

A HUMBLE TRIBUTE

Inspired by the trust reposed in us by Gyani Kesar Singh, patriot-researcher-novelist of long forgotten heroes of our freedom struggle, we have endeavoured to piece together the documentary input provided by him pertaining to Martyr Madan Lal Dhingra's trial into a readable whole.

The book contains three chapters. The first two chapters 'The Genesis' and 'The Trial' have been written by Prof. Malwinderjit Singh Waraich and the third chapter 'The Perspective' has been contributed by Dr. Kuldip Puri.

Not being historians, we are aware of our limitations. Though there are a fair number of books on the Martyr, yet to the best of our knowledge, none of these writings depict the trial scenario as per judicial records.

While Dhingra's mortal remains were brought back from England and his last rites were performed in October 1976, an equally precious legacy of the Martyr lies buried in the trial records which also deserves retrieval. There are two identical copies of his 'statement', both in his own hand. One of these was recovered from his pocket at the time of his arrest and the other was found in his apartment after his arrest. Both these copies were screened by the authorities and were then sealed for 'security reasons'. The two documents figure as Exhibits No. 16 and 23 respectively (vide Chapter II (c) An unofficial version of the statement was published in The Daily News of 12th Aug 1909, and is reproduced on pages 10 and 51-52 also.

Should we not retrieve at least one copy of the statement, being the testament of a selfless crusader of our national freedom struggle, who embraced death, thousands of miles away in England, way back in 1909, when none in India dared even mention 'independence'?

Chandigarh Authors
March 2003

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THE STATEMENT

"I attempted to shed English blood intentionally and of purpose, as an humble protest against the inhuman transportations and hangings of Indian youth.

In this attempt I consulted none but my own conscience; conspired with none but my own duty.

I believe that a nation unwillingly held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible I attacked by surprise… since cannon could not be had I drew forth and fired a revolver.

As a Hindu I feel that the slavery of my nation is an insult to my God. Her cause is the cause of freedom. Her service is the service of Sri Krishna. Neither rich nor able, a poor son like myself can offer nothing but his blood on the altar of Mother's deliverance and so I rejoice at the prospect of my martyrdom.

The only lesson required in India is to learn how to die and the only way to teach it is by dying alone.

The soul is immortal and every one of my countrymen takes at least two lives of Englishmen before his body falls the Mother's salvation is a day's work.

This war ceases not only with the independence of India alone, it shall continue as long as the English and Hindu races exist in this world.

Until our country is free Sri Krishna stands exhorting' if killed you attain Heaven; if successful you win the earth.'

It is my fervent prayer, may I be reborn of the same mother and may I redie in the same sacred cause, till my mission is done and she stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God."

PREFACE

Madan Lal passed his Intermediate Examination from the Municipal College, Amritsar and then joined Government College, Lahore. He left that college and worked in two minor posts. Finally his father's consent was obtained to his going to England to study Engineering.

Madal Lal Dhingra, a scion of a rich family of Amritsar, who according to the C.I.D. report, arrived in London in July, 1906 and on October 19, he became a student of Engineering at the University College, which he continued to attend upto the last day of June, 1909. He is said to have visited the India House soon after his arrival in England and to have resided there for about six months from March or April, 1908 and also for about a month in the early part of 1909. He regularly attended the meetings held at India House but no record exists of his having taken any part in the discussions or of his having made a speech there. On leaving the India House in April, he went to reside at 108, Ledbury Road, Bayswater.

Shyamji Krishna Verma was the founder of India House. He was a great scholar of English and Sanskrit. He taught at the Ballioil College, Oxford. He was very much impressed by the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who believed that - "Resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative. Non-resistance hurts both altruism and egoism."

To fight for the independence of India, he founded a Home Rule Society on February 18, 1905. He bought a house - 65, Cromwell Avenue, Highgate, London and named it India House. He issued first number of the *Indian Sociologist*

as the organ of the Society. India House was duly opened by Dr. Hyndman on 1st July, 1905.

He announced two fellowships - one in the name of Shivaji and another in the name of Guru Gobind Singh, who both had fought against the foreign rule of Mughals. He announced that he proposed to found five fellowships " for enabling Indian graduates to finish their education in England and to qualify themselves for an Independent profession"….. "Each candidate selected as fellow under this scheme shall have completed the eighteenth year of his age, and shall solemnly declare that after his return to India he shall not accept any post, office, emoluments, or service under the British Government."

Lokmanya Tilak recommended Vinayak Damodar Savarkar for Shivaji Fellowship and Guru Gobind Singh Fellowship was given to Harnam Singh of Amritsar.

Savarkar and Harnam Singh travelled by the same ship *Persia* from Bombay to London and reached London in July, 1906.

Madan Lal Dhingra joined the students' boarding in India House on his arrival in London.

About a year before Savarkar arrived, Shyamji Krishna Verma and his friends had met on 9th of May, 1905, at an Indian restaurant to commemorate the First War of Independence of 1857. After this meeting, this celebration became an annual affair. As soon as Savarkar arrived he organized a new society called Free India Society and became a spirited leader of the students boarding at India House. Within a short time India House was turned into a centre of Indian revolutionaries. Right since Free India Society was formed the boarders of India House and their friends had been celebrating the birthdays of Shivaji and Guru Gobind Singh.

After the collapse of Indian Revolution of 1857, May 1st was observed in Britain as a Victory Day over the Indian

Revolution. On 6th of May, 1907 the Daily Telegraph newspaper proclaimed in its head lines "Fifty years ago this week an Empire was saved by Deeds of Heroism." A drama was staged in which Rani Laxmi, Nana Sahib and other patriots were depicted as murderers.

Savarkar was outraged. He called a meeting of young revolutionaries and decided to counteract the propaganda vilifying the patriots of the First War of Independence. It was decided to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the First War of Independence.

On the 10th of May, 1907, the India House was decorated with lights. The pictures of patriots were hung in golden frames. Indian students came from all over Britain to attend the function. The hall of India House was packed with men and women. A large number of students had to stand.

Aiyer, Savarkar, Khan, Das, Master and others made spirited speeches. Special badges were distributed to the students who took a pledge to serve their mother land. A great revolutionary Rewaji Rana from Paris brought a very inspiring message from Madam Cama, the beloved leader of India revolutionaries settled in Europe.

The function concluded with the distribution of *Chapatties* (bread) because just before the war of 1857, *Chapatties* were distributed all over the country as a token of the coming revolution.

Guru Gobind Singh Fellowship holder Harnam Singh and Rafi Ahmad, both students of Agriculture College, exhibited on their coats the badges of 1857 commemoration. The Principal of the college asked them to remove the badges which they refused, and instead boycotted the college.

These circumstances brought the students and the British Government into direct conflict. Secret Service was directed to watch the activities of the boarders and visitors of India House.

The consequence of all this was the assassination of William Curzon Wylie, at the Imperial Institute on the evening of July 1st, 1909 by Madan Lal Dhingra, a student of Engineering. Dr. Cowasji Lalcaca from Shanghai who advanced towards Dhingra was also shot dead. Dhingra was arrested.

Lord George expressed to Winston Churchil his highest admiration of Dhingra's attitude as a patriot. Churchil shared the same view. They compared Dhingra with Plutarch's immortal heroes.

"On personal grounds I regret the death of Sir Curzon Wylie, whom I had the pleasure of first meeting twenty years ago. The assassination which according to the patriotic and courageous statement made last Saturday by Mr. Dhingra in the course of police court enquiry, was committed entirely on political grounds. I frankly approve of the deed and regard its author as a martyr in the cause of Indian Independence."

(A quote from an article headed "Indian Martymdom in England, written by Shyamji Krishna Verma, published in his paper *Indian Sociologist*.)

Mr. W. S. Blunt wrote in his book - "My Diaries" :-

"People talk about political assassination as defeating its own end, but that is nonsense, it is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like the other fiction that England never yields to threats. My experience is that when England has her face well slapped she apologises, not before. No Christian martyr ever faced his judges more fearlessly or with greater dignity….. The day of Dhingra's execution would be regarded as one of martyrdom in India for generations."

Bande-Matram was a monthly organ, published by Madam Cama in Geneva, Switzerland. Lala Har Dayal in the issue of *Bande Matram* of September, 19, 1909 wrote

about Dhingra - "Dhingra has behaved at each stage of his trial like a hero of ancient times. He has reminded us of the history of medieval Rajputs and Sikhs who relished death like a bride. England thinks she has killed him; in reality he lives for ever, and has given the death blow to English sovereignty in India."

To honour the sacrifice of Madan Lal Dhingra, Madam cama issued a monthly organ "*Madan Talwar*" from Berlin in February, 1910 and the paper stated - "The *Madan Talwar* has made its appearance in Berlin, the capital of the country which is at present most hostile in spirit to England. We congratulate our comrades on their choice. The arm of the British Empire cannot reach them in that heaven of refuge, and the cultivation of friendly relations with the powerful German nation will be of great advantage to the cause of Indian independence. The programme of active resistance with political assassination as a prelude is advocated with splendid earnestness. There is no trace of any inclination towards compromise or hypocrisy in any of its pronouncements."

In an issue of the same organ Lala Hardial wrote another article entitled 'Lest We Forget' in July 1910 - "On the first day of July last year our hero martyr Madan Lal Dhingra attained to perfection the ethos of total renunciation of self. He proved to the world that the oppressed and down-trodden people of our country had found a champion whose hand could smite the tyrant in his pride and bring joy and hope to many a lonely humble home made desolate by pitiless greed. He embodied in himself the wrath, indignation, self-possession and daring of modern India and in his noble figure, defying death and scorning life. Young India was the incarnation of her highest hopes and fondest dreams….. The month of August is full of sacred memories for us. For, on the 10th of August, 1908, Khudiram Bose - the young martyr-passed away from this

world of sin and sorrow, giving his life to lighten the burden of its misery. And on the 17th of the same month last year Madan Lal Dhingra - the young lion of the Punjab - followed the footsteps of the martyr who had gone before. The calender of new India is beginning to count its red-letter days, recalling the life and death of saints and martyrs….. They, too, could have lived like other men, if they had liked. But they cared not for these fleeting shows. They renounced them of their own free will. Let us learn to make great sacrifices for the cause so that we may carry on their mission….."

There is some confusion about Dhingra's statement. After his arrest his written statement was taken by the police from his pocket. The police ignored his request to produce his statement in the court. At the Westminster Police Court before Mr. Horace Smith, he made the following statement:-

"I do not want to say anything in defence of myself, but simply to prove the justice of my deed. As for myself, no English Law Court has got any authority to arrest and detain me in prison, or pass sentence of death on me. This is the reason I did not have any counsel to defend me.

"And I maintain that if it is patriotic in an English man to fight against the German if they were to occupy this country, it is much more justifiable and patriotic in my case to fight against the English. I hold the English people responsible for the murder of 80 million of Indian people in the last 50 years, and they are also responsible for taking away 100,000,000 pounds every year from India to this country. I also hold them responsible for the hanging and deportation of my patriotic countrymen, who did just the same as the English people here are advising their countrymen to do. And the Englishman who goes out to India and gets, say £ 100 a month, that simply means that he passes a sentence of death on a thousand of my countrymen, because these thousand people could easily

live on this £ 100 which the Englishman spends mostly on his frivolities and pleasures.

"Just as the Germans have no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India, and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill the Englishman who is polluting our sacred land. I am surprised at the terrible hypocrisy, the farce, and the mockery of the English people. They pose as the champions of oppressed humanity -the people of the Congo and the people of Russia, when there is terrible oppression and horrible atrocities committed in India; for example, the killing of two millions of people every year and the outraging of our women. In case this country is occupied by Germans, and the Englishman not bearing to see the Germans walking with insolence of conquerors in the streets of London, goes and kills one or two Germans, and that Englishman is held as a patriot by the people of this country, then certainly I am prepared to work for the emancipation of my Motherland. Whatever else I have to say is in the paper before the Court. (After Dhingra's arrest his written statement was recovered by the police, from his pocket and the police ignored his request to produce his statement in the court.) I make this statement, not because I wish to plead for mercy or anything of that kind. I wish that English people sentence me to death, for in that case the vengeance of my countrymen will be all the more keen. I put forward this statement to show the justice of my cause to the outside world, and especially to our sympathizers in America and Germany."

One copy of the statement was found in his pocket when he was arrested and another one in his residential room which the Government did not want to cite. Dhingra was to be hanged on August 17 and a few days earlier the Government was surprised to read a version of the statement in THE DAILY NEWS under the heading of 'CHALLENGE'.

"I attempted to shed English blood intentionally and of purpose, as an humble protest against the inhuman transportations and hangings of Indian youth.

"In this attempt I consulted none but my own conscience; conspired with none but my own duty.

"I believe that a nation unwillingly held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible I attacked by surprise - since cannon could not be had I drew forth and fired a revolver.

"As a Hindu I feel that the slavery of my nation is an insult to my God. Her cause is the cause of freedom. Her service is the service of Sri Krishna. Neither rich nor able, a poor son like myself can offer nothing but his blood at the altar of Mother's deliverance and so I rejoice at the prospect of my martyrdom.

"The only lesson required in India is to learn how to die and the only way to teach it is by dying alone.

"The soul is immortal and if every one of my countrymen takes at least two lives of Englishmen before his body falls the Mother's salvation is a day's work.

"This war ceases not only with the independence of India alone, it shall continue as long as the English and Hindu races exist in this world.

"Untill our country is free Sri Krishna stands exhorting 'if killed you attain Heaven; if successful you win the earth.'

"It is my fervent prayer, may I be reborn of the same mother and may I re-die in the same sacred cause, till my mission is done and she stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God."

This research about the life and sacrifice of Shaheed Madan Lal Dhingra could not have been completed without the help of Bawa Balwant, the great Punjabi poet and Lala Mukand Lal Dhingra, the son of Lala Kundan Lal Dhingra, and the nephew of Shaheed Madan Lal Dhingra. Lala Mukand Lal provided us with the dairy of

Rai Sahib, Sahib Ditta Mal Dhingra (the father of Shaheed Madan Lal Dhingra) as well as very valuable pictures. I am indebted to both of them.

In my Punjabi novel on the Martyr published in 1977, I had the opportunity to make use of all this material for the perusal of the Punjabi readers. However, I had felt it imperative to get the same presented in a narrative form in English for the benefit of non-Punjabi knowing readers.

Ultimately my choice fell on Prof. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich (Ex-Professor, Guru Nanak Engineering College, Ludhiana and now an Advocate in High Court at Chandigarh) for his close association with the history of revolutionary movement especially the Ghadr Movement of 1914-15. I had got associated with him through legendary Baba Hari Singh (1879-1969) a veteran Ghadrite and life long crusader for freedom of the Motherland. Besides, I chose Dr. Kuldip Puri, Department of Regional Resource Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh for this venture. He is son-in-law of my life long friend late Principal Sujan Singh, an eminent Punjabi writer.

The authors have fully justified my choice by integrating the heterogeneous matter into a coherent narrative weaved into a proper historical perspective.

23rd Oct, 2002

Kesar Singh Gyani
(Novelist)
Edmonton-Alberta
CANADA

Madan Lal Dhingra

CHAPTER 1

THE GENESIS

"And I maintain that if it is patriotic in an Englishman to fight against the Germans if they were to occupy this country it is much more justifiable and patriotic in my case to fight against the English... Just as the Germans have no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill an Englishman who is polluting our sacred land.

"I wish that the English people should sentence me to death; for in that case the vengeance of my countrymen will be all the more keener."

(From the statement of Madan Lal Dhingra before the Police Court made on 10th of July, 1909.)

(a) Bhagat Singh on Dhingra (March 1928).

In the eyes of Bhagat Singh, Madan Lal Dhingra was the first revolutionary martyr of Punjab. He paid his tributes to this pioneer rebel in his own inimitable style in an article commemorating his supreme act of patriotic sacrifice.

In his portrayal of the Martyr, Bhagat Singh feels fascinated by a poem by great Bangla poet Qazi Nazarul Islam "The Rebel". A free translation of the poem written by him reads :-

"Me the rebel feels war weary
I too shall rest, when
no cry of the suffering beings
would rend the sky.
None shall whine in agony
and the blood thirsty dagger of
the cruel oppressors,

shall cease to pierce the innocent;
Nay! would vanish.
Then and then only I would rest in peace!"

Continues Bhagat Singh:- "Such singularly exceptional rebels, who challenge the powers that be, and jump into flames of their wrath, forget all about their own well-being, while beautifying the world at large; and the human society moves forward by virtue of their mortification. Such heroes descend from time to time. India too had them, has them and shall continue to have them. Within India, Punjab had a plentiful share of such gems. In the twentieth century the trail was blazed by Madan Lal Dhingra."

Mindful of the neglect by the society in general of such rebels, Bhagat Singh tellingly opines:-

"He was not a 'Neta' whose biography may have been published and quickly sold. Nor was he an '*Avtar*' descending on earth about whom the astrologers and devotees could weave anecdotes of divinehood since his birth, suggesting that he was in fact born 'different.' Nor are we cognizant of any rare feats of Dhingra's infancy or childhood on the basis of which we could have said, that 'all this foreshadowed greatness'.

"He was a hapless rebel. His own father had disowned him. Even the 'nationalist' leaders like Bepin Chander Pal who were known as radicals, not to mention the sycophants, showered on him the choicest abuses. *Then how tough be the task of obtaining the material to reconstruct his life sketch full twenty years thence now* (in 1928).

"In such like conditions we have undertaken the writing of his life profile, lest we forget his very name with passage of time. Faced with this predicament, I attempt to piece together the bits collected about him, to present the same before the readers."

Bhagat Singh then delves into the personal background of the martyr in so far as his sources of information could

help him to do so. He had quoted the observations of a well known intelligence agent Mr. E.T. Woodhall's write up on Dhingra published in a periodical "Union Jack" in March 1925...that "Dhingra was an extra-ordinary man. His passion for flowers was remarkable. He would keep sitting in a secluded corner of a park and shall keep on gazing at flowers like an enchanted poet, his eyes, emitting instant shine at random"

The phenomenon of "random shine in the eyes of Dhingra" had been specially noted and commented upon by the said agent. He had a foreboding that 'There is a man to keep an eye on. He will do something desperate someday'

This citation shows that the intelligence people did nurture a lurking suspicion about Dhingra's potential for some desperate act. Possibly, his abstention from the typical frivolities indulged in by most of Indian students in England drew the special attention of the secret police.

Bhagat Singh, then, having alluded to Dhingra's personality traits resorts to a narration of the developments in England of those days. He had pinpointed the starting of "India House" by Savarkar as a fallout of *Swadeshi* movement in India.

Bhagat Singh had, in another cognate article published earlier, depicted the peculiar mindset of the patriotic Indians residing in England in those days titled "*Significance of 10th May-1857*" being the day associated with the starting of *Ghadr* when rebel Indian sepoys raised the banner of revolt in Meerut cantonment and advanced towards Delhi in order to capture the Red Fort, the symbolic capital of India.

Bhagat Singh had sub-titled the above article with words to the effect that it was the first war of liberation . Beneath that he had cited a Panjabi couplet (since the article was in Panjabi) which was chanted by *Ghadrites* of 1914-15 while celebrating the 10th of May every year. Its English

translation is as follows:

Suffering hearts be rent with agony,
but tenth of May be not forgot.
The Day we launched the Crusade,
let us rejoice, never moan.

According to the Bhagat Singh, mere fact that the attempt of 1857 was a failure, it was disparagingly called a *Ghadr (Mutiny)* instead of a revolution and its leaders were stigmatized. Had they met with success, they would have been remembered with respect like Washington (USA) and Mazzini (Italy) as great liberators. Had the 1857 uprising been successful, names like Tantia Tope, Nana Sahib, Maharani of Jhansi, Kunwar Singh and Maulvi Ahmed Sahib and others, would have been commemorated as liberators of India, and days associated with them would have been observed as 'National Days'.

Bhagat Singh laments that the history books made available for our reading evoke little regard for these heroes because they are being portrayed as murderers, robbers, religious fanatics and what not, while their opponents, the oppressors are projected as heroes. It is because all the histories of 1857 upheaval had been authored either by the Britishers who are holding India in slavery despite the resentment of Indians by sheer force of sword, or by their sycophants. The only proud exception was the monumental work of Savarkar 'The History of Indian War of Independence of 1857'. Expectedly the book was instantly banned, thereby depriving the Indians the chance to obtain a better insight into the event.

What kind of atrocities were heaped upon Indians in the wake of suppression of the revolt, writes Bhagat Singh, had been graphically portrayed in a classic work "The Other Side of The Medal" by Mr. Edward Thomson. The aim of this writing was to expose the hypocrisy of Englishmen who had dished out the tales of horrible atrocities visited upon

them by the Ghadrites. The said book then countered the pernicious propaganda by exposing the horrors indulged in by Englishmen like Neil, Havelock, Hudson, Cooper and Lawrence upon the hapless women, children besides others.

Adds Bhagat Singh: 'But every freedom lover would hang his head in shame to learn that, even these persons whose forefathers were in the forefront of this uprising, and who in fact ought to have taken pride in their ancestors, hesitate to call it a war of liberation. It is so since the oppression of the English rule had choked them so much, that they are passing their days in ignominy. Thus not to talk of commemorating those ancestor heroes, even a mention of theirs was anathema'.

Indeed it was a peculiar twist of circumstances that nurtured the tradition of celebrating 10th May 1857 by Indians in England as the red letter day which heralded challenges to the very existence of British rule in India.

The precise unfolding of this trend of glorifying past heroes of freedom struggle had then been dwelt upon by Bhagat Singh.

This trend of glorifying heroes of past struggles against the British rule germinated and caught on initially in England, then in Canada, America and even beyond, though not on the Indian soil as yet.

Narrates Bhagat Singh, "In 1907, The English thought of celebrating their history of 1857 by way of Golden Jubilee. To refresh the events of 1857, the leading English papers brought out special issues containing articles of eminent Englishmen. Plays were staged, lectures delivered wherein the *Ghadrites* were painted in the darkest possible colours. So much so, that whatever was suggested to their minds whims and fantasies, was ventilated.

"Stung by the abuses showered upon (the leaders of 1857) Mr. Savarkar undertook to organise functions in honour of the Indian heroes like Nana Sahib, Maharani

Jhansi, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh and Maulvi Ahmed Sahib to present an authentic picture. It was indeed a daring venture, which was then started at no place other than the English capital London. Since an average Englishman considered these Indian Leaders as scoundrels, no Indian leader of consequence dared to join these occasions. But the youth were all for Savarkar. A special function was organised in India House (run by Savarkar) in their memory . Fasts were observed, and pledges taken that for one full week none of the luxuries shall be indulged in. Leaflets entitled 'O ! Martyrs" were distributed in India and England. Indian students, studying in Oxford, Cambridge and Inn's, Court sported beautiful badges on their chests, "*In Honour of Martyrs of 1857*". Many scenes of tension were witnessed both in bazaars and universities and colleges in the wake of the above events. Many (Indian) students lost their scholarships, while many others gave them up on their own. Quite a few were called back to India by the parents. Political scenario in England became *radicalised*. Consequently, the Indian government felt perturbed and disturbed.

"The news of all these developments somehow reached far and wide. Wherever (outside India) the said events became known, 10th May was celebrated with gusto. The people felt enraged that the English stigmatized our national heroes. They started observing 10th of May each year partly in protest against their leaders' dark portrayal by the ruling class, and partly to commemorate their heroic exploits."

Bhagat Singh concluded the article by reminding his countrymen of their obligation to the motherland for whose liberation hundreds and thousands of Indians laid down their lives; to search their hearts, to introspect in order to realise their responsibility as true sons of India.

As highlighted in the above cited article, it was precisely the attempt of the rulers to glorify their success in

suppressing the 1857 uprising while tarnishing the names of the Indian leaders that provoked people like Savarkar to do the opposite at the said juncture of 1907 i.e. fifty years after the event. The inevitable followed. The articulate opinion on the issue became polarized into PRO-1857 and ANTI-1857 segments. The extent and magnitude of this polarization shall be fully borne out by the contents of *Indian Sociologist* edited by the eminent Indian revolutionary Sh. Shyamaji Krishan Verma from Paris. One issue (July 1909) had been relied upon by the prosecution in the trial of Dhingra to establish that his act of killing an Englishman was not a freak event but the inevitable result of a particular outlook disseminated among others by publications like *Indian Sociologist.*

(b) 'Indian Sociologist' - The Catalyst

Though the title of the periodical sounds like that of an academic journal but the contents, seen from the angle of the ruling class of the day, were indeed subversive, and pernicious. In fact the sub-title of the journal read:-

(Reproduced from original court records) :

INDIAN SOCIOLOGIST

"AN ORGAN OF FREEDOM, AND OF POLITICAL SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORM"

"Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man" Herbert Spencer, Principles of Ethics, Section 272.

"Resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative. Non-resistance hurts both altruism and egoism." Taken from 'The Study of Sociology' edited by Shyamji Krishan Verma.

"A Brief Statement Of Our Case"

"At the risk of alienating the sympathies and good opinion of almost all our old friends and acquaintances in England and of some of our past helpmates in India, we repeat that political assassination is not murder, and that the rightful employment of physical force connotes "force used defensively against force used aggressively" as aptly expressed by the late Hon. Auberon Herbert in his Herbert Spencer Lecture at Oxford in 1906."

"POLITICAL OFFENDERS SHIELDED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW - a most important decision"

"In our contention that political assassination is not murder, we have the support of International Law according to which political offenders have not sinned against the morality of the universe, but against the absurd laws of an antiquated political system, like the one now prevailing in India. It is chiefly on this account that "nations the most humane, or the most jealous of their own sovereignty," says an American authority on International Law, "have felt it to be base and wrong to send back voluntary exiles to their native land." A most important case was lately decided in the United States on this point.

"To its great credit the powerful Republic of America has ratified and re-affirmed the principle:- "The United States will not hand back to a foreign government political refugees who have sought the protection of a free country". In Pouren's case the Russian authorities asserted that he was guilty of robbery arson and attempted murder. But Commissioner Hitchock justly and humanely declared "However revolting the acts charged may have been, we must still consider that they were committed while the country was in a revolutionary state and were more or less justified". By refusing to return Pouren the American Government simply gives notice to the world that it will not be used as the tool of political oppression, although the revolutionists demanding protection of a free flag may have been guilty of acts which American citizens and the American Government do not approve, and although it was proved that Pouren was guilty of charges brought against him."

"EXTRADITION TREATIES FAVOUR POLITICAL OFFENDERS - historical evidence"

"The fifth article of the extradition Treaty between Great Britain and France provides that "No accused person shall be surrendered if the offence, in respect of which his surrender is demanded, shall be deemed by the party upon which it is made to be a political offence, or to be an act connected with such an offence". In pursuance of this treaty the French Government declined to hand over to England in 1883 the Irish refugees who were concerned in the Phoenix Park murders. The Ministry in fact adhered to the ground which England herself took in 1871. At that date the English Cabinet refused to extradite the refugees of the community, arguing that the charges brought against them were of a political nature.

"The United States and Great Britain entered into a treaty in 1842, providing for extradition in cases of murder, assault with intent to commit murder, etc. Political offences are not specifically excluded; but President Tyler, in transmitting the Bill to Congress observed that the Bill was carefully confined to such offences as all men agree are heinous and destructive to the security of life and property, so that "political offences and criminal charges arising from wars or intestine commotions might be excluded."

POLITICAL ASSASSINATORS ARE OFTEN BENEFACTORS OF THEIR RACE.

"We are not here concerned with the question how England in her own territory should deal with persons who commit political assassinations and whom she, of course, regards as murderers. The chief object we have in view is

to point out that all unprejudiced men treat political assassinators not as criminals in any way but often regard them as benefactors of their race."

"MADAME DANIEL LESUEUR IN THE *MATIN* ON THE USE OF FORCE."

"A remarkable article under the heading *Le Droit a La Force* - The Right to use Force - recently appeared and indeed occupied the place of honour in the well-known French newspaper, "Le Matin", in the course of which the writer emphasizes the truth that "every creator of work has a right to defend the result of his effort even though it be by force, if it is attacked by wicked and destructive forces". The author of the article significantly adds, "How then can one defend anything if not by force? For it is force that attacks. What is there shameful or culpable in the employment of force, when it is preservative and defensive? Ever since the time of Hercules, the slayer of monsters, every person or every race that has done anything heroic for the strengthening of the good or for the destruction of the evil has been glorified, blessed and applauded by the grateful masses for, the peaceful and industrious masses have need of security for weaving in a humble way the web of their prosperous days" . Madame Daniel Lesueur, the able writer of the article in question, is publishing a book bearing the title, *Le Droit a La Force*, which the Editor of the "Matin" thinks will create considerable sensation. Without expressing any opinion about the suitability of her arguments concerning the political problems in France we commend the general sociological truths she enunciates. One salient point to which she urgently invites the attention of her readers, and which we think deserves the careful consideration of Indian Nationalists is that the phrase 'The Right to use force' ought to be accompanied by the more imperious phrase 'The Duty to use Force' (Le devoir de la force)."

"NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DEMANDS USE OF FORCE"

"It is thus clear that both International Law and ethics support our contention with regard to the right and duty of individuals or nations to use force for obtaining freedom in general and for liberating themselves from oppressive alien rule in particular, it being quite immaterial in what form that force is employed."

(c) The Context

The context in which such writings appeared, needs be reflected upon to appreciate their true import. A seemingly philosophical debate about the ethical dimensions of the use of force and violence was in fact reflective of the contrasting perceptions of those who stood to gain from the then existing international political dispensation as the bulk of the Asian and African population was reeling under the oppressive and parasitic over-lordship of European Imperialism, headed by England on the one hand, and the subject races who were at the receiving end on the other. Expectedly the former justified use of force in wars between countries and nations but condemned the same if it was used to dethrone the rulers.

It is therefore, not incidental that the killing of Curzon Wylie by Dhingra on Ist July 1909 was instantly perceived as a *political crime.* The 3rd July issue of *The Times* had dealt with the entire complexion of the incident quite in detail.

"Indeed, a document found on the prisoner shows that the murder was political in character. At the present stage the police are very reticent as to the contents of this paper which consists of three foolscap sheets in scrubbed handwriting. *(Note: The contents of this writing were never officially disclosed though these were allegedly published in DAILY NEWS of August 12,1909).* But it is understood that

the paper sets forth the political convictions of Dhingra as a bitter enemy of British rule in India. It declares that rule to be unjust and iniquitous and says that *any and every means are legitimate on the part of Indians to gain independence* (Emphasis added). The document also intimates that the writer was proceeding to the reception fully determined to kill at least one European. It observes that if only all Indian students were of like spirit and prepared to do deeds of the same kind at all hazards, the liberation of the country would soon be secured.

"There can be no question, therefore, that Dhingra has imbibed with disastrous effect the teachings of Mr. Krishna Verma and others who more or less directly favour and commend political assassination. The assassination is significant as the first serious Indian Political crime committed outside the borders of the Dependency(India). The tale of outrage and assassination in India is well known and need not here be recapitulated . But it is equally well known that the incitements to crime have nowhere been more persistent and insidious than in London among the student class. Though policy may have dictated some restraint as to giving effect in the capital of Britain *to the murderous doctrines inculcated, it has been feared in well-informed quarters* that this *immunity* may not continue (Emphasis added). Indeed more than a year ago some public man of great prominence was privately warned that the question of removing him was under the consideration of Indian anarchists (Anarchist was the favorite mode of depicting anti-British agitators). It is understood that certain continental anarchists (Reference presumably denoted persons like Shyam Ji Krishan Verma based in Paris, France) approached with a view to securing their cooperation declined to give any aid on the ground that such action might prejudice the asylum they now obtain in this country."

(d) Seditious Propaganda

"But there is a strong feeling in well- informed circles that more determined efforts than hitherto should be put forth to suppress the activities of agents of sedition working among these youngmen and particularly that Mr. Krishan Varma's *Indian Sociologist* should not be printed with immunity in London." In the July issue (Extracts reproduced above) Mr. Krishan Varma declares: -

"At the risk of alienating the sympathies and good opinion of all our old friends and acquaintances.... we repeat that political assassination is not murder. All unprejudiced men treat political assassinators, not as criminals but as benefactors of their race.

"It may be recalled that the teachings of Mr. Krishna Varma led to his being disbarred by the Benches of the Inner Temple." (He was deprived of the license to practice law) Elsewhere in the same vein, it had been observed in the same issue of the paper that Dr. Dhingra (elder brother of Madan Lal) had informed Sir Curzon Wylie that his brother had been an inmate for a short period of Mr. Krishan Varmas' India House and he came under the spell of the pernicious doctrines taught there.

"The paper *Indian Sociologist* in which these theories are openly preached for the youthful frequenters of India House and of other Indian students in great Britain bears the imprint of a firm of London printers.

"It has long been thought not improbable that the Indian anarchist movement might be directed more and more from London and Paris and less and less from Calcutta and Poona……..

"We must trust that it (the murder) will have an immediate effect upon a large body of more or less 'advanced' Indian reformers and also upon their sympathizers and in the ranks of the Radical and Labour parties... what we shall hope to see is active and steady

cooperation on the part of all in tracking out and suppressing the Anarchical Conspiracy."

(e) India House

Indeed India House was the brain child of Shyamaji Krishna Varma. It aimed at distracting the Indian students from the pro imperialist *Indian Association.* He rented a house for this purpose (65, Cromwell Avenue, Highgate London) and named it *India House.* It provided living accommodation to Indian students besides providing a meeting place for them. He approached Tilak for sending such Indian youth for the purpose of studies, who, after completion of studies dedicate themselves for the cause of India's freedom. For this object Shymaji instituted scholarships named after Guru Gobind Singh and Shivaji . On recommendation of Tilak, Vinayak Savarkar arrived at London under Shivaji Scholarship scheme. He joined India House and got enrolled in 'Gray's Inns' for qualifying as a Barrister.

Soon upon his arrival in July 1906 Savarkar organised "Free India Society" and started enrolling Indian students as its members quite openly. Patriotic seminars, brain-storming sessions on martyrdom of Indian freedom lovers became the order of the day. Lala Hardial too was an active participant therein. Verinder Chattopadhya from Bengal, V.P.S. Pyer from Rangoon (Burma which too was part of India till 1937) and Gian Chand Verma were among those who actively took part in these activities. Gian Chand Verma was the secretary . Madam Cama, was a great patriot who belonged to Parsi community and had gone to Europe in 1902 for medical treatment. Forgetting her affluence, she opted to jump in the freedom struggle. She delivered many a speeches in the Hyde Park in favour of India's freedom and was an active participant in *India House* deliberations. Senapati Bapat, a student of Engineering too

was an active functionary in the movement.

India House as hinted above was the brainchild of Shyamji. Its primary object was to inoculate the Indian students against the pro-British Indian Association by alluring them away from the charm of government jobs towards the service of motherland. *Indian Association* on the contrary was the handiwork of those British officials who had served in India in high profile jobs and continued to subserve the imperial interests even after their retirement and thereby also maintained their relevance back home. The purported objective of this association was to facilitate the admission/studies of Indian students in England, but the actual agenda was to make them imbibe the ethos of loyalty to the British Crown. Ironically, the mainstream National Party, the Indian National Congress which since independence had marginalised all else in claiming the entire credit for obtaining freedom was then itself a "Loyalist" organisation *par excellence.* It is a fact of history, that during the First World War Gandhiji himself volunteered to work as a recruiting agent for the Imperial Army alluring Indian youngmen to fight and die for the cause of the British Empire. This shows the extent and depth of the loyalist feelings among the Indian elite. Indeed, in case of Gandhiji the above episode of his life would put a big question mark on his being on apostle of *Ahimsa.* Day in and day out, he went all out to condemn Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries for their violent proclivities. The height of this perverted outlook was manifested when he refused to join the whole nation including the Congress leaders like Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru in paying homage to Jatin Das, an associate of Bhagat Singh who died in Lahore jail due to hunger strike on September 13, 1929.

It may indeed look almost fantastic, that the *first call for national revolt in twentieth century* came from abroad by the *Ghadr Party* organised by emigrant Indians settled in

Canada and USA.

(f) 1907 - The Watershed

Thus 1907 stands as a watershed in the chain of events leading to a polarisation of standpoints in regard to 1857 uprising. On one side, the British took the initiative in celebrating Golden Jubilee to signify their grand victory. On Ist May 1907, a drama was enacted on a public stage in which Rani of Jhansi , Tantya Tope, Nana Sahib and other Indian crusaders were shown to be barbaric and morally debased murderers. On the other side Savarkar, stung by all this, called a meeting of Indian students in the *India House.* It was resolved to hold a big function on 10th of May 1907 to pay homage to the martyrs of 1857 and for taking a pledge to join the freedom struggle. Duties were assigned to personally intimate the Indians in London on house to house basis. Also it was decided to prepare badges in the honour of martyrs. Stage-setting was assigned to Harnam Singh and Gian Chand Verma was the overall coordinator.

For ensuring widest possible participation, letters were sent to Indians, specially the students living in England. All were invited to come to London on that day to join the celebrations. Young men went from door to door to motivate their fellow countrymen to take part in the venture. They were specifically instructed to enlighten them about the patriotic significance of 1857. All through the day, they devoted their time to their studies, but at night they all went out to disseminate the message of their national mission.

A day prior to the function youngmen from different places started pouring in at London in small groups. *India House* started humming with guests. The building was decorated with lights like on Diwali. On red cloth banners having flower embedded borders, names of the martyrs were embossed in golden colour and these banners were fitted in frames. Bahadar Shah Zafar, Nana Sahib, Rani

Jhansi, Tantia Tope, Raja Kunwar Singh, Maulvi Ahmed Shah and other names shone on the banners.

Madan Lal Dhingra was among the active organisers and had taken full share of mobilizing people in the company of Harnam Singh. Participants represented the entire spectrum of India encompassing East, West, South and North. Gian Chand Verma initiated the proceedings by leading the audience in singing *Vande Matram*. It climaxed with resounding slogans *Vande Matram*. The participants had come from places like Oxford, Cambridge, Redding, Edinburgh etc. The badges sported by them indicated the place from where they had come.

The whole atmosphere was electrified by the presentation of a Bangla poem by Chattopadhya radiating patriotism. This was followed by the recitation of a poem in Marathi by a Maratha youngman. The climax came when Harnam Singh recited the legendary hymn from Guru Granth Sahib which later found place on the top of *Ghadr* paper started by *Ghadr* party in USA on Ist Nov.1913

"Jo Tau Prem khelan ka chao
Sir dhahr tali gali mori aao" (Guru Nanak)

(If thou seek to engage in the game of Love then step into my way with thy head on thy palm.)

Vinayak Savarkar then took the stage and reminded the audience of the well known words of great philosopher Herbert Spencer (same ones that had been reproduced in the *Indian Sociologist*). He dwelt at length on the momentous happenings of 1857 highlighting the sacrifices of Bahadar Shah and Nana Sahib. Then he proceeded to communicate the following message to the audience:-

"The British had demonized our heroes by labelling them as barbarians, thereby challenging our sense of honour. Let us, today convey to the souls of our heroes that we shall raise the same like banner of revolt and make the flag of martyrdom fly again. We shall own your cause

as ours. We shall fight against foreign rule. The struggle for freedom initiated by you shall continue till we attain the goal. There is no scope for compromise in the struggle for free India. We shall win or perish !"

Then as if he was face to face with the martyrs, he said, "Martyrs of our nation! bestow upon us the strength to enable us for making the supreme sacrifices like you. Give us the steadfastness which you displayed . Permit us to intermingle our blood with yours, O the martyrs of my country ! you are our guiding light. Ever keep emitting light…. ever keep doing so."

The gathering responded with thunderous cries of *Vande Matram* after the conclusion of his speech. Madan Lal Dhingra was observed to be almost in a trance as if he had been transposed to another world.

Next day two students of Agriculture College, namely Harnam Singh and Rafi Ahmed Khan went to attend the classes sporting badges of the First War of Independence. The Principal having observed them called them in his office and tried to coerce them to remove the badges. Both preferred to give up their studies rather than acquiescing at the disparagement of the national heroes. When this was published in the newspapers, hot debate followed. All the patriotic minded Indians empathized with the duo.

Ironically the British public opinion though avowedly committed to the intrinsic worth of freedom of expression and open debate, the hallmark of a liberal society, started resenting such ventilation of feelings and ideas by Indians. The Times dated 4 July,1909, took a dig at those who defended the freedom of expression at all costs arguing that "But intemperate denunciation of the Indian Government because, under enormous difficulties, it governs India by methods not identical with those applicable in this country, must be held responsible, however, little its authors may intend it, for creating an atmosphere of unrest and for

exciting exaggerated expectations. English audience are accustomed to violent political diatribes and as they come from both sides they perhaps do no permanent harm. *But when addressed to or what is the same thing read by Indians, who have none of our correctives to apply they do infinite mischief.* (Emphasis added). They do not incite to crime, but they powerfully contribute to produce the inflamed state of feeling out of which crime readily springs. *Weak and unbalanced minds brood upon these fiery denunciations of British rule,* all the more potent when they come from Englishmen, *until they become the prey of a fanaticism* capable of the worst deeds (Emphasis added).

(g) The Bogey Of Conspiracy

Then follows the recourse to the favourite bogey of the oppressors *the conspiracy!* The conceit deeply ingrained in the psyche of the classes representing the vested interests is, that the people and public in general is very well contented - "*sab achha hai.*" But for the proverbial trouble makers namely viz. the "terrorists" or "anarchists" the commonality would enjoy the perpetual bliss of the benevolent tutelage of the gentry !

"That the wretched murder of Sir Curzon Wylie was not the handiwork of any set of conspirators. We are ready to believe. *all the same there is a conspiracy in India to upset British rule altogether;* there is a vernacular press preaching recourse to the most violent methods; and there has been actual violence and murder by bomb throwing and the like on a scale which *forbids the supposition that only isolated individuals are concerned.*" (Emphasis added)

One is reminded of the prosecution of hundreds of *Ghadrites of* 1914-15 in *conspiracy cases* (called Lahore Conspiracy case series) alleging a "conspiracy to subvert the British rule in India by violent means." Ironically, this conspiracy was hatched by thousands of Indian emigrants

in America in a series of public meetings meticulously detailed in the judgements. The dictionaries of English language need re-define the word "Conspiracy" which unambiguously denoted the *act of plotting in secret.*

What is suggested in the above quoted words is that though Madan Lal Dhingra alone was fully responsible for the murder of Curzon Wylie, yet there *was a conspiracy* behind it. What follows then is all the more revealing. It takes to task not only the radical section of Indian national movement but also the moderate reformists. "There are also reformers who may not aim at getting rid of British rule altogether, but whose language is of so violent a kind that *an excitable population* (i.e. Indians) *cannot be expected to understand the precise limitations of their aspirations* (Emphasis added). That mass of inflammatory appeals to passion even apart from overt acts by their authors, is certain to produce crime in others. There are always ill-balanced minds (among Indians) upon *which prudential motives do not operate,* and in which *unbridled violence of speech led infallibly to violence of action.*" (Emphasis added)

Another myth, similar to that of '*Conspiracy*' is also propounded that is of a '*Ploughman*', lacking the power of discrimination. A letter to the Editor of *The Times* published in its issue of 4th July, 1909 on the issue reads: "There is no line of demarcation in the minds of millions of Indian between the 'unrest' which produces a crop of disloyal questions in parliament or edits a paper like 'India' and the anarchism which wantonly murders a friend because he is an Englishman. Life is very simple for a ploughman as the plough; *he cannot differentiate between disloyal deeds.*" (Emphasis added)

The same paper in its issue of 6 July, 1909 adverts again to its pet theme of a larger conspiracy. "It will not be easy to convince the British public (sic !) that there is not at this moment an anarchical conspiracy in India in the face of

the strong evidence afforded by the long list of bomb outrages and of organised murders and murderous attacks upon officials and officials concerned in the administration of justice which is upon record".

As for 'record' the above allusion to bomb outrages etc. seems to be directed at the Muzzaffarpore (Bengal) Bomb case. On 30th April 1908 a bomb was thrown into the carriage in which Mrs. & Miss Kennedy (wife and daughter of Mr. Pringle Kennedy, a European Lawyer) who were returning from the club. Miss Kennedy was killed and Mrs. Kennedy mortally wounded. The bomb was intended for Mr. Kingsford, District Judge, who had recently been Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta. Next day a Bengali youth Khudi Ram Bose aged 19 was arrested at Waini railway station. Another youngman Prafula Chaki was another accused in the case, who shot himself dead as Mokameh on May 2, 1908 when police tried to arrest him.

As per the 'records', this is the solitary instance of an attack on an official concerned with administration of justice. Though we do come across instances of approvers in such like cases being shot dead as in case of Narinder Nath Gosain of Alipore Bomb case in Alipore Jail but not a single other instance of an attack on a judge.

This much for the facts on record!

Misconceptions about the revolutionary stream of Indian freedom movement were spread far and wide. It is disconcerting to find that even a semblance of a radical refrain disturbed the peace of mind of not only the English rulers, but also of the moderate segment of Indian nationalist leaders represented besides others by Gandhiji. There are classic instances such as the treatment meted out to radical leaders within the Congress like Subhash Chander Bose. Often it was presumed by 'moderate' leaders that the only hurdle in the grant of home rule to India were the nefarious

activities of 'terrorists' like Bhagat Singh !

(h) The Climax And Aftermath

Hence it is not a matter of chance that it was after about full 30 years of India's attainment of freedom that someone in authority thought of retrieving the mortal remains of Madan Lal Dhingra besides those of Udham Singh which lay buried in the jail premises at Pentonville. This callous neglect of the sacred legacy of these selfless patriots may need be juxtaposed to the glorification of those who never hesitated to condemn these youngmen.

To set the record straight, the only momentous event in the few years preceding 15 August 1947 *within* India was the *Naval* revolt triggered by the trial of I.N.A. Heroes - Sehgal, Dhillon, Shahnawaz which was supported by the Indian populace particularly in Bombay, of whom hundreds were killed by indiscriminate firing which prompted Sahir Ludhianvi, the Urdu poet to say

Janta Ka Lahu Faujon
Se Mila
Faujon Ka Lahu Janta
Se Mila
(Blood of soldiers intermingled with that of people and vice versa.)

This model of climaxing of freedom struggle was the model adopted by the 1857 people, later consciously followed by *Ghadrites* of 1914-15, and then by I.N.A. under the leadership of Subhash Chander Bose. The British decided to leave India - under the threat of revolt of their backbone, the armed forces, backed by the general public. The reaction and role of Congress leaders in response to the said revolt is now history. It was the 'iron man' of Congress, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel on whose appeal the rebels surrendered. These patriotic soldiers were arrested and sentenced. Even after 1947, they continued to suffer.

The portrayal of the unrest among a vast section of Indians in the first decade of twentieth century may remain incomplete without taking into account the parallel developments not only in England, but also in Canada and America. The intelligence reports of the said period contain two documents which are indicative of the nascent, militant patriotism. One is '*Khalsa Pamphlet*' - orginating at Highgate, London dated September 17, 1910, and the other is a Rule Book of "*Hindustani Association*" based at Vancouver (Canada) dated October 23, 1910.

The former is a soul - stirring appeal to the followers of Guru Gobind Singh - opening with "*Vande Matram Khalsa*" and concludes with:-

"Therefore, Awake Oh! Khalsa, arise Oh! Khalsa and never again shall we be fallen. Liberate *Bharat Mata* from the clutches of *Mallechh Farangis*"

"*Sat Sri Akal*"

The other document postulates a model constitution of *Hindustani Associaition* - the name initially adopted by the legendary *Ghadr Party*, with the object of "*Establishing Liberty, Equality and Fraternity* of the Hindustani nation in their relations with the rest of the nations of the world."

The self appointed apologists of the British, attributed the birth of *Ghadr* Party to Lala Hardial, the founder general secretary of the party. But he had yet not even landed in America in 1910 when this document incorporating the manifesto of the *Ghadr* movement was already there.

Although the British propaganda labelled this line of thought as Anarchism, it had no affinity at all what is commonly connoted by the term, which means "A Philosophy which denies the need of any kind of government or laws, and seeks to abolish these institutions."

Not by any stretch of imagination, the Indian patriots be imputed any affinity of thought or feeling with Anarchism. As a matter of fact, the propaganda machinery

of the rulers thought that any stick to beat the revolutionists was alright and as that time the term "Anarchist" stood for political rogues.

Thus we may infer that when Madan Lal Dhingra maintained in the course of his statement before the trial court that if it was patriotic in an Englishman to fight against the Germans if they were to occupy this country, it is much more justifiable and patriotic in my case to fight against the England" he was articulating not merely the sentiments of a single Indian but of a much wider spectrum of Indians both at home and abroad.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRIAL

(a) The Choice of Target

Before going into the details of the incident of killing of Sir Curzon Wylie by Dhingra on July 1,1909 and its aftermath it would be in place to focus on the motive. Seen in the light of relevant facts, it would be truthful to aver that no individual as such was the target, and it was the *National Indian Association* which drew the ire of a patriot like Dhingra. The avowed aims of the Association as reported by *The Times* dated July 3,1909 were:-

That it held "Several afternoon or evening gatherings of the kind (i.e. like the one held on July 1, 1909) in the course of the year mainly for the purpose of giving the many young Indians, temporarily residing in this country, facilities to meet sympathetic English people in social intercourse. Opportunity is taken to introduce the Indians to one another and to other visitors, and frequently, as a consequence of such introductions, they receive invitations to the homes of Anglo-Indians and other well wishers. The 'At Home' on Thursday (i.e. July 1, 1909) was largely attended..."

Indeed, it can be safely inferred that the setting up of *India House* by persons like Shyamji Verma, later coordinated by Savarkar was a counter move to wean away and insulate the Indian students in England from the pro-imperialist *National Indian Association.* At least from the viewpoint of Indian patriots, the said Association was far from being either '*National*' *or* '*Indian*'.

The circumstances surrounding the actual killing of Sir Curzon Wylie strongly corroborate the presumption that the choice of victim as a person was in a way incidental.

As per the report in *The Times* dated 2.7.1909 "shortly before 11' Clock last night at the Imperial Institute at the conclusion of a public gathering an Indian student whose name has not yet been disclosed, shot dead Lt. Col. Sir William Curzon Wylie". The above circumstances coupled with the precise time of arrival of the victim, fits in squarely with the suggestion mooted above. According to Ms. Emma Josephine Beck, Hony. Sec. of National Indian Association, 'Sir Wylie came rather late, probably about 10.30 p.m. during the evening, I should think about 10.40 p.m.' Dhingra on the other hand had left his living apartment at about 7.30 or 8.00 p.m. and he took a cab as per the deposition of his land lady Ms. Marry Harris. Dhingra arrived at the reception soon after 9.00 p.m. according to Ms. Emma Josephine Beck, Hony. Sec. of the *National Indian Association.*

Finally, it was observed by *The Times* dated 4.7.1909 in a write-up captioned '*A Political Crime*', "a point upon which all are agreed is that there cannot have been any ground for affront on the youngman's part in respect to any action of Sir Wylie. Nothing could exceed the courtesy and consideration which Sir Wylie always exhibited towards the young Indians with whom his duties brought him into contact. He did the utmost to fulfil any reasonable request they might make to him and in seeking to help them he went far beyond the strict letter of the requirements of his official position. Hence, it is inconceivable that the motive of the crime should have been merely personal."

Admittedly the motive was not merely 'personal' yet at the same time, it is not justifiable to deny that Sir Wylie as a person fell in the class of potential targets. It is so because he was among the most active and influential organizers of the *National Indian Association.* As reported by *The Times* dated July 3,1909, Sir Curzon Wylie and lady Wylie have almost invariably been present on these

occasions (i.e. gatherings like the one as on 1.7.1909). But what makes him stand out from the rest of his class is the rapport which he enjoyed with Madan Lal's loyalist family based at Amritsar. A letter addressed by Sir Wylie to Madan Lal Dhingra on 13th April,1909 (exhibited by the prosecution) is indicative of the fact that Kundan Lal, one of the elder brothers of Madan Lal Dhingra had approached Sir Wylie to be of 'some assistance' to the latter. Now Kundan Lal was the eldest among the brothers of Madan Lal. He had the responsibility of looking after the extensive family estate. He had personal friendship with Sir Wylie. There are reasons to believe that his request to Sir Wylie to take care of Madan Lal was born out of the natural anxiety of a hard boiled loyalist family about the anti-government sentiments of Madan Lal. It is amply borne out by the *family abhorence* ventilated by the family from Amritsar instantly upon hearing of the killing as if the family had some sort of thus like premonition.

The career graph of Sir Wylie (1848-1909) suggested that he was cut out for the role he assumed i.e. of enticing away the Indian students from any kind of agitational activity. He had initially served in the army and became a Lt. Col. Then in 1879 he got posted in the Political Department of Government of India. This innocuous looking department dealt with the most sensitive and secretive activities of the government. He had an important role to play in Second Afghan War and some times had functioned as the Military Secretary to the Governor of Madras Presidency. He had held highly sensitive assignments in big Indian States like Hyderabad. Also he served as a Resident in Nepal. In 1901 he became A.D.C. to the Secretary of State for India, the all powerful minister of the Royal Government masterminding the Government in India. Among his awards and decorations figured prestigious ones like C.I.E., K.C.I.E., M.O.V. and C.V.O.

With such like variegated exposure to the diverse sections of Indian populace he possessed a considerable amount of insight into the psyche of an average Indian, both in its strong and weak dimensions. He fully exploited this knack of handling Indians for weaning them away from any trace of disloyalty to the British Empire. Because of all these antecedents and activities he was abhorred by Indian patriots like Shyamji Krishan Verma, Savarkar and others. This hatred was obviously shared by Madan Lal too.

So not surprisingly, Madan Lal's response to the offer of Sir Wylie *vide* his letter of 13th April 1909 to meet him remained ignored. There is nothing known to anyone as to what followed the receipt of this letter by Dhingra. But under the given warp and woof of currents and cross currents Dhingra would have felt rather slighted by the condescending offer of Curzon Wylie to receive him in his office at "India Office" (the official Head Quarters of Indian Affairs of British Government).

It would thus not be going too far to infer that Sir Wylie represented the class or the species which were particularly responsible for keeping India under the subjugation of the British. But it is equally vital to reckon with the contextual significance of *National Indian Association* which provided the forum to persons like Sir Wylie to play upon the weaknesses, fears and frailties of the Indian youth.

This is what explains as to why Madan Lal, after having braced himself for the assault, fully armed and above all having carried the 'Statement' enunciating his goal in his pocket, while leaving a copy in his apartment too reached the venue of gathering of the Association. He came at about 9 pm and Sir Wylie had just arrived at 10.40 pm when the gathering was in fact dispersing, which meant Dhingra did not find any other 'suitable' target for attack. One may very well conjecture that had Sir Wylie failed to come, Madan Lal may have gone back as such. In fact,

since Madan Lal did not *prima facie* share his precise intentions with *anyone,* he may have infact gone fully prepared for a similar act prior to July 1, 1909 too but may have abstained from doing it for the want of the desired target or the opportunity.

From the statement he made in person before the court, and also from the statement recovered from his person, it is transparent that he bore a grouse as an Indian against the British rulers for enslavement and exploitation of his countrymen. It was the *system* which evoked his wrath and not any individual as such. Besides, the specific target was also chosen, like *National Indian Association* which was perceived by persons like Dhingra to be the handmaid of British masters. It seemed to have guided him to select the said institution for the attack, ultimately zeroing it on Sir Wylie. It is, therefore, not fortuitous that the only allusion to Sir Wylie in his court statement is of 'an Englishman who is polluting our sacred land', and nothing beyond.

(b) The Preparations

The ultimate object could be to make persons like Sir Wylie desist from pursuing their anti-Indian activities, that too under the garb of being well wishers of India.There is little doubt that Dhingra had prepared himself thoroughly for the act. As testified by the arms dealer William Burrow in the court, Dhingra had purchased the colt automatic magazine pistol on 26th Jan.1909. This was the weapon which was actually used, though another pistol of Belgian make was also found in Dhingra's pocket besides a sword. Not to take any chances, Dhingra had practiced target shooting as deposed by Henry Station Morley in the trial. He was the proprietor of 'Fairy Land' an exhibition of automatic machines and a shooting range. The range was designed for pistols and rifles.

According to him Dhingra had been practising at the

range for two or three months. He practised with his own pistol and had been there for no other purpose. Sometimes he came once or twice a week. He always used his own pistol and ammunition. He used to have 12 shots at a time and used to pay 6 d. He used to take deliberate aim and pause between each shot. Sometimes the shots were fired more rapidly together. He(the witness) thought that he (Dhingra) improved slightly in his shooting."Dhingra used colt's automatic pistol like the one shown to the witness in the court. Witness was not familiar with the kind (of weapon). It ejected the spent cartridge immediately after it had been fired, automatically another cartridge from the magazine comes up taking its place.

It was further revealed by the same witness that no one but else than Dhingra had used one of those automatic pistols during the last three months. Normally the customers were provided with 320 Webly revolver by the proprietor. The bullets used in Dhingra's pistol were of nickel steel. They made a clear hole in the target.

The witness remembered having seen Dhingra at his shooting range on 28th June(1909) at about 12 or 1 p.m., his usual time for coming. That day he fired 12 shots with his pistol, and then asked him to clean the barrel which he did. He had also seen Dhingra on the fateful day of Ist July 1909, in the evening at about 5.30 p.m. (This is consistent with the statement of the land lady that Dhingra had left his apartment at about 2 p.m. or a little after and came back at 6 p.m. or a little before). The firing practice was done like that on 28th June, on 1ST July 1909 as well. Finally he also mentioned that the distance between the shooter(Dhingra) and the target used to be about 18 feet. According to the house owner, the room had been rented by the tenant in April 1909. He occupied one room on the ground floor. He used to go out daily between 11 and 12 (F/N) according to the witness and returned usually about

7 p.m., sometimes about 2 p.m. In the evening he usually stayed at home. During the week beginning 28th June, he spent the first three days (28th, 29th & 30th) much as usual. On the face of it, Dhingra used to keep his own company at the socially crucial hours of the evening, presumably contemplating over his agenda.

(c) The Statement

The written statement found in his pocket and also at his residence was probably drafted and finalized during these three days. When, asked by the court to make a statement on 10th July,1909 "if he so desired", just before concluding the statement in the court, he is on record to have said that "whatever else I have to say is in my statement which is in the court." As per the prosecution file, a copy of the statement had been found upon him on his personal search and a ditto copy from his apartment (exhibits Nos. 16 & 23 respectively). Both these exhibits had been kept "sealed" by the orders of the court and its contents were never officially disclosed.

When, (after making the statement in the court), he was pointedly asked if he wanted to say anything more, he again mentioned "another statement on foolscap papers." When the judge insisted that "if there was anything else you wish to say you must say it now", Dhingra shot back that "The paper was taken from my pocket". "I don't care what was taken from your pocket" retorted the judge impatiently. "Anything else you have to say you must say to the jury. What you have written on a previous occasion is no evidence in this case," ultimately Dhingra said "No".

But when the purportedly exact copy of the statement was published in "Daily News" edition of 12th August 1909, it came like a bombshell.

"I attempted to shed English blood intentionally and of purpose, as an humble protest against the inhuman

transportations and hangings of Indian youth.

In this attempt I consulted none but my own conscience; conspired with none but my own duty.

I believe that a nation unwillingly held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible I attacked by surprise… since cannon could not be had I drew forth and fired a revolver.

As a Hindu I feel that the slavery of my nation is an insult to my God. Her cause is the cause of freedom. Her service is the service of Sri Krishna. Neither rich nor able, a poor son like myself can offer nothing but his blood on the altar of Mother's deliverance and so I rejoice at the prospect of my martyrdom.

The only lesson required in India is to learn how to die and the only way to teach it is by dying alone.

The soul is immortal and every one of my countrymen takes at least two lives of Englishmen before his body falls the Mother's salvation is a day's work.

This war ceases not only with the independence of India alone, it shall continue as long as the English and Hindu races exist in this world.

Until our country is free Sri Krishna stands exhorting' if killed you attain Heaven; if successful you win the earth.'

It is my fervent prayer, may I be reborn of the same mother and may I redie in the same sacred cause, till my mission is done and she stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God."

"The Times" dated 20th August 1909 in *Political Notes,* captioned *'Dhingra's alleged statement'* commented:-

"The statement which it is alleged Dhingra committed to writing before his execution was found in his room. There is every reason to believe that he did not compose it, but that it was composed by those who egged him on to commit murder. The statement found in Dhingra's room was at once taken possession of by the police and it has been shown to none outside the official circle. Yet, none the less, copies of this statement have been given to various persons and to one newspaper. These circumstances, it is pointed out, afford proof that the statement found in Dhingra's room was a copy of a document, original of which is in the hands of others. Moreover, the style of the composition of the statement is entirely unlike the style of Dhingra's statement before the Magistrate. Copies of the document, it is stated, have been received by some persons from England." A careful reading of the above commentary goes to suggest that Dhingra's act was being ultimately attributed to someone else who had 'egged' him to commit the murder, and the authorship of the document in question too had been attributed to same very person.

This way, Dhingra had been projected only as a proxy of a mysterious hand. Although there is no worthwhile explanation as to how, and wherefrom a copy of Dhingra's statement could be made available for circulation and publication, the hypothesis offered above is just conjectural. The presumption underlying the 'egging' theory could be that among the militant patriots someone chose to stay behind while instigating Dhingra to take the plunge. This is totally at variance with the history and traditions of the revolutionary movement of India. There we do come across instances of persons like Bhagat Singh insisting on he himself undertaking the hazardous task of throwing bombs in the Parliament and Raj Guru's equally persistent plea to accompany him in place of B.K. Dutt, but never to the contrary as insinuated in the said write up.

Thus, there is enough of material to sustain the proposition that Dhingra had prepared and fortified himself fully and totally for the act, and had no illusions about the consequence that being inevitable sentence of death.

(d) The Killing - Eye Witness Account

The scenario of the killing had been depicted by *The*

Times dated July 3, 1909 under the caption '*The Scene at the Reception*':-

"The reception which closed in this terrible manner was the annual summer evening 'At Home' of the *National Indian Association* which holds several afternoon or evening gatherings of the kind in the course of the year mainly for the purpose of giving the many young Indians, temporarily residing in this country, facilities to meet sympathetic English people in social intercourse..... The 'At Home' on Thursday night (1.7.1909) was largely attended, fully 200 persons being present, and more than one member of the committee remarked during the evening that it was perhaps the most successful of its kind held under the auspices of the association for some years past. A pleasant feature was the large proportion of Indian ladies and gentlemen attired in their national dress. Sir Charles and Lady Lyall received the guests, and among others present were Sir Steurat and Lady Bayley, Sir Lesley and Lady Probyn, Sir Frederic Candy, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, and Princess Sophiee Dhuleep Singh.

"Sir Curzon and Lady Wylie have almost invariably been present on these occasions. They had been dining (that evening) at the Savoy Hotel with Mr. Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Chairman of the Bombay Mill owner's Association and his younger brother who are in this country on a brief visit. After dinner they drove with their host to the reception and as usual both Sir Curzon and Lady Wylie had a busy time giving or receiving introductions and chatting.

"The reception was to close at midnight but already by 11'o clock the stream of departures had set in. Mr. Currimbhoy Ebrahim had escorted Lady Wylie downstairs to the cloakroom and Sir Curzon was about to follow but stopped to speak to one or two Indians with whom he had no previous opportunity to converse.

"It was in the midst of this scene that Lady Wylie who had preceded her husband downstairs in order to obtain her wraps from the cloakroom returned to the landing attracted by the sound of the shots. She found Sir Wylie dead. In the course of the efforts made to seize the assailant, a Parsi doctor of Shanghai Dr. Cawas Lalcaca was also shot and died while being conveyed to St. George's Hospital."

(e) Police Court Proceedings

A first hand account of the entire chain of episodes happening on the fateful evening of Ist July 1909 had been recounted by the **key eye-witnesses** in the police court.

It is being reproduced verbatim as per their respective testimonies in the court.

1. Emmma Josephine Beck
   Hony. Secy of National Indian Association who had issued the invitation letter to Dhingra, and saw him at 9.00 p.m.
2. Sir Lesley Probyn
   Who had a scuffle with Dhingra after the firing.
3. Madan Mohan Sinha
   The only Indian among the deponents, a law student, who had also grappled with Dhingra.
4. Capt. Douglas W. Thornburn
   A journalist, who took part in holding Dhingra after he had been secured.
5. Charles Rolleston
   An ex-Indian Army officer, who searched Dhingra and spoke to the latter in *Hindustani.*

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1. And this Deponent **Emma Josephine Beck,** 168, Kensington Park Road. on affirmation saith as follows:

I am Hon. Sec. of the National Indian Association.

I know the prisoner, whom I[st] met about four months ago in London.

In view of the entertainment of 1st July, I sent him a ticket of invitation, with others on my own initiative.

I was at the entertainment myself and I saw prisoner there. I first saw him soon after 9 p.m.

Sir Wm. Wylie came rather late, probably about 10.30 p.m. During the evening, I should think about 10.40 p.m. I had some conversation with prisoner about his work. He told me he had finished his course at University College, and his examination would be in October, for a M.I.C.E. I asked him if he knew many people there, and he said he knew some. I knew his address 108, Ledbury Road. I had written to this address at University College.

I knew Sir Curzon Wylie. I gave him prisoner's address at University College some time this year, after I had written the letter of [5th] May.

Sd/ Emma Josephine Beck

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2. And this Deponent **Sir Leslie Probyn, K.C.V.O.** 79, Onslow Square, S.W. On oath saith as follows:

I knew Sir Wm. Hutt Curzon Wylie for many years.

On 1st July I went to the Imperial Institute at about 10:50 p.m. I saw Sir Wm. and Lady Wylie there. There was being held an entertainment connected with the National Indian Association, and an unusually large number of English and Indian ladies and gentlemen were present. It was held in a large hall, from which two folding doors give access to the vestibule and a large exit staircase.

About 11 p.m. I and Lady Probyn went towards the door to leave. As we got there I heard sounds as of shots, 3 or 4 fired rapidly. Then I went forward and heard another and then I saw another one fired. I suppose I must have gone through the exit door. After the first 3 or 4 shots I saw the prisoner holding a revolver in his hand not pointing it at anyone in particular so far as I could see.

The next thing was that the revolver was fired, and instantly he turned it round and put it to his temple.

I then rushed at him and caught hold of his left hand with my right, and my left hand at his revolver hand. And then I never let go of his left hand and I managed to get the revolver into my left hand. I suppose I tumbled down some how, but I never let go of the revolver. An Indian gentleman, Mr. Sinha was on the other side of him, holding him.

I suppose prisoner resisted; I don't know. I tumbled on my nose, and injured my rib and my face. My nose bled. After a while after the struggle was over, the police arrived. I think prisoner asked for his spectacles, and Mr. Sinha put them on. I remember nothing else. I kept holding prisoner till a constable arrived. I then said this is the man who did it; and then I let go. But I kept the revolver in my hand and walked through the hall with it. Afterwards I came back and handed the pistol to an Inspector.

This pistol is no doubt the one I have been speaking of.

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3. And this Deponent **Madan Mohan Sinha,** 26, Maida Hill West. on affirmation saith as follows:

I am a law student in the Kiddle Temple.

About 9.20 or 9.30 p.m. on [1st] July I went to the Imperial Institute to the entertainment. I am a member of the National Indian Association.

I knew Sir William Wylie personally. I saw him after I got there. I think he arrived about 10.35 or 10.40 p.m.

About 11.10 p.m. I was in the entertainment hall, 5 or 6 yards from the door leading to the vestibule. There was no one between me and the door. From where I was I could see out on to the Vestibule. I was facing the platform in the hall, and on turning to my right, I could see Sir Curzon 3 or

4 yards from the door in the Vestibule. I heard shots which caused me to turn. I saw prisoner facing Sir Curzon Wylie, leveling his revolver, and actually shooting. He was about 2 yards, or even less, away from Sir Curzon Wylie, and to the best of my recollection he was firing at the left side from the back afterwards. The puff of smoke went that way. Sir Curzon's head moved from one side to the other, and he dropped 3 or 4 yards from the door. I rushed in that room, and prisoner changed his position nearer the anisters round the exit straircase with his back towards them. As I rushed towards him he straightened his arm towards me, but suddenly he put it in his right ear - That is the best of my recollection. There was a click, but no explosion.

Certainly, I heard more than 4 shots, in quick succession. I could not count them. I pulled up prisoner's two arms, from the back and then pushed him with my right knee. He fell over by some chairs, on to his knees. I was still holding him from the back, with my right knee over his back. He had the pistol in his hands, and was struggling hard. There were other people fighting in front of him. I held him and shouted for help. I held him till the police man arrived, and then a second one arrived, and I left prisoner to them

While I held him he wanted his spectacles and some one took them from a chair (they had fallen off) and put them on.

When I moved forward I noticed the body of Sir W.M. Wylie lying near the door. I also saw Dr. Lalcaca: I first noticed him when I was struggling with the prisoner. He was on the ground, further from the door.

I saw a second revolver and a big hunting knife taken from the prisoner.

This pistol (No. 1) is like the one prisoner fired.

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4. And this Deponent **Douglas Wm. Thornburn,** National Liberal Club.On Oath saith as follows:

I am a journalist, and I was present at the Imperial Institute on 1st July.

I arrived at about 9 p.m. At about 11 p.m. I was in the Reception Hall near the doors. I happened to look into the Vestibule. There were very few people round the doors, and I could only see two people standing in the vestibule. One was (I now find) Sir Curzon Wylie and the other I know is the prisoner, who had on a lounge suit and a blue turban.

They were standing at about arm's length, facing one another, apparently conversing. Almost on the instant that I saw them, prisoner raised his arm, I saw a revolver, and he fired 4 shots full in the face of the other gentleman whom he was facing, who fell on the fourth shot. They were fired so rapidly that the 4 were fired before Sir Curzon had time to collapse. Next I saw 2 more shots fired, after an interval of a few seconds. I saw the flash, but could not see where the revolver was pointing.

I rushed towards prisoner, and at the same time I had the impression of some one falling, on my right, near the staircase. Others ran at him at the same time. Prisoner got one hand free and placed the revolver to his right temple. I heard just a click. Prisoner was then seized. I took part in holding him. I said : Why have you done it? What have you done? But he made no reply. All I heard him say was something about his spectacles.

I then noticed the bodies of Sir Wm. Wylie and Dr. Lalcaca on the floor. Dr. Lalcaca was not dead.

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5. And this Deponent **Charles Rolleston,** 87, Broadharst Gardens, N.W.On oath saith as follows:

I am a retired army officer.

On the evening of 1st July, I was at the At Home at the Imperial Institute as a guest. I was in the entertainment Hall at about 10.45 p.m. or 11 p.m.

I heard a sound of about 5 explosions. On hearing them I looked towards the door leading to the vestibule. I saw rather a cloud of smoke; and a young man in a lounge suit and a blue turban - came to the door, raised a revolver in his right hand, and took deliberate aim at a native in European dress clothes, and fired. As far as I recollect he fired only once at that gentleman. Prisoner was about 5 or 6 feet from him at the time he fired. The Indian gentleman instantly fell backwards. I then went forward towards the door of the vestibule and in the vestibule I saw the body of Sir Curzon Wylie with a larger pool of blood on the left hand side.

The body of the Indian gentleman was about 3 yards or 4, from the body of Sir Curzon Wylie. The native gentleman was writhing on the ground.

The man who had fired was being held by 2 or 3 gentlemen. It was the prisoner.

I saw a revolver and a dagger taken from one of the prisoner's pockets. I took from his inside pocket some papers, which I retained and afterwards gave to a police officer. One of them was apparently foolscape size folded into four, and there were other smaller ones.

In prisoner's pockets I also found a 6 or 7 inches pocket pen knife, a few keys, a pair of spectacles in a case, a handkerchief and a pair of gloves. They were handed by me to the police.

I said to prisoner in English (as far as I remember) what is your name and where do you live? He said 'Dhingra' or something like that. He said he lived at Ledbury Road, I believe. I asked what could have prompted him to commit this act. He said he could tell the police. I then spoke to him in *Hindustani,* much the same questions. He did not answer me in *Hindustani.* I am almost sure this was before the police arrived.

Statement of the Accused:

"Madan Lal Dhingra (hereinafter called the accused) stands charged before the undersigned, one of the Magistrates of the Police Courts of the Metropolis sitting at the Westminster Police Court, in the Metropolitan Police District, this tenth day of July in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and nine as herein before set forth, and the said charge being read to the said accused, and the said witnesses for the prosecution being severally examined in the presence of the said accused, the said accused is now addressed by me as follows:

"Having heard the evidence do you wish to say any thing in answer to the charge ? 'You are not obliged to say anything unless you desire to do so, but whatever you say will be taken down in writing, and may be given in evidence against you upon your trial, and if you desire to call any witness, you can now do so.'"

Whereupon the said Accused saith as follows:

"I don't want to say anything in defence of myself, but simply to prove the justice of my deed. As for myself, I do not think that any English Law Court has any authority to arrest me or detain me in prison or to pass sentence of death on me. That is the reason I did not have any counsel to defend me. And I maintain that if it is patriotic in an Englishman to fight against the Germans if they were to occupy this country it is much more justifiable and patriotic in my case to fight against the English; I hold the English people responsible for the murder of 80 millions of my countrymen, Indians I mean, in the last 50 years. And they are also responsible for taking away £ 100,000,000 every year from India to this country. I also hold them responsible for the hanging and deportations of my patriotic countrymen, who do just the same as the English people

here are advising their countrymen to do; and an Englishman who goes out to India and, say, gets £ 100 a month, that simply means that he passes sentence of death on 1,000 people who can very easily live with those £ 100 which the Englishmen spend mostly in his frivolities and pleasures.

"Just as the Germans have got no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India, and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill an Englishman who is polluting our sacred land.

"I am surprised at the terrible hypocrisy, farce and mockery of the English people, when they pose as champions of oppressed humanity as the people of Congo and the people of Russia, when there is such terrible oppression and horrible atrocities committed in India, for example, killing two millions of people every year, and outraging our women. In case this country is occupied by Germans, and an Englishman not bearing to see the Germans walking with the insolence of conquerors in the streets of London, goes and kills one or two Germans, then if that Englishman is to be held as a patriot by the people of this country, then certainly I am a patriot, too, working for the emancipation of my motherland. Whatever else I have to say is in my statement which is in the Court."

'I made this statement not because I wish to plead for mercy or anything of that kind. I wish that the English people should sentence me to death; for in that case, the vengeance of my countrymen will be all the more keener. I just forward this statement to show the justice of my case to the outside world, especially to our sympathizers in America and Germany. That is all.'

Taken before me as aforesaid on the day and years above mentioned. HORACE SMITH (10 July, 1909)

As per the press reports the prisoner was then removed. Throughout the lengthy hearing he had

maintained an exceedingly calm demeanor.

(f) The Press Reportage

Under the British procedural law, the preliminary phase of the trial is called Police Court Proceedings, something like an inquest or the official investigation or inquiry into a sudden and unexpected death.

'The Times' dated July 3,1909 reported these proceedings under the caption **Police Court Proceedings-**

"Late in the day(July 2, 1909) Dhingra was brought up at the Westminister Police Court.

"Madan Lal Dhingra, 25 a native of the Punjab described as an Engineering student of Ledbury Road, Baywater was brought before Mr. Horace Smith, charged with wilful murder, by shooting at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington of Lt. Col. Sir William Curzon Wylie, a retired Indian Official and Dr. Cowasjee Lalcaca, a Parsi physician.

"The prisoner who gave his age as 25 years is of slight build, of dark olive complexion and has thick black curling hair falling over his forehead. He wore large gold rimmed glasses and was dressed in a darkly well-worn ordinary lounge suit. He stood in the dock *apparently unconcerned* with hands in his pocket.

"Mr. Bodkin appeared for the Prosecution. He said that it was only proposed to give formal evidence of arrest and then ask for a remand for eight days.

"Constable Nicholas stated that - "At shortly after 11,O clock on the previous night he was called to the Indian Section of the Imperial Institute. I saw the prisoner being held by some gentlemen. I then saw the bodies of Sir Wylie and also of Dr. Lalcaca. I took the prisoner into my custody. The prisoner smiled and asked no questions.

"Nicholas was followed by Superintendent **Albert Isaac -** in having seen the prisoner detained at 12.30, this

morning (July 2, 1909). Subsequently, charged with the murders the prisoner nodded his head and his lips moved but whatever he said was inaudible though the witness was only a yard away.

"The prisoner speaking good English though rapidly said, "The only thing I want to say is that there is no wilful murder in case of Dr. Lalcaca. I did not know him. When he advanced to get hold of me, I simply fired in self-defence."

"It was noticeable that throughout the entire proceedings no friend of the prisoner or any of countrymen attended. He chatted unreservedly in an animated way and with a smile on his face to the police after remand and was later in the day conveyed in a four wheel cab by detectives to Brixton prison."

"A POLITICAL CRIME"
COMMENTS IN *THE TIMES* DATED 3.7.1909

"Dhingra has been in this country for some months(?) and his two elder brothers were students here before him. One of them is a medical practitioner who did remarkably well in his studies here a few years ago and published a small hand book on physiology. It is understood that this gentleman, Dr. K.L. Dhingra wrote to Sir Curzon Wylie some two months ago expressing his profound regret that his younger brother, while studying here, had come under the mischievous influence of Mr. Krishna Varma's *India House* and had indeed for a short time been an inmate there. He (Dr.K.L. Dhingra) requested Sir Wylie to expostulate with him (Madan Lal) on his conduct, and so use his utmost influence to wean him from the evil company into which he had entered.

"Our representative learned yesterday that Sir Wylie promptly took steps to carry out the wishes of Dr. K.L. Dhingra. He made inquiries as to the address of the young man and wrote to him asking him to call at the India Office.

Madan Lal does not appear to have done so but there is nothing to show, apart from any statement the prisoner may himself make, whether he had an interview with Sir Wylie elsewhere than at the India Office. Probably Sir Wylie's letter was never answered.

"A point which all are agreed is that there cannot be any ground for affront on the young man's part in respect to any action of Sir Wylie. Nothing could exceed the courtesy and consideration which Sir Wylie always exhibited towards the young Indians with whom his duties brought him into contact. He did his utmost to fulfil any reasonable request, they might make to him, and in seeking to help them he went far beyond the strict letter of the requirements of his official position. Hence, it is inconceivable that the motive of the crime could have been merely personal. Indeed a document found upon the prisoner shows that the murder was political in character. At the present stage the *police are very reticent as to the contents of this paper,* which consists of three foolscap sheets in crabbed handwriting. But it is understood that the paper sets forth *the political convictions of Dhingra as a bitter enemy of British rule in India.* It declares that rule to be unjust and iniquitous and say that any and every means are legitimate on the part of Indians to gain independence. The document also intimates that the writer was proceeding to the reception fully determined to kill at least one European. It observes that if only all Indian students were of like spirit and prepared to do deeds of the same kind at all hazards, the liberation of their country would soon be secured.

"There can be no question therefore that Dhingra has imbibed with disastrous effect the teachings of Mr. Krishna Varma and others who more or less directly favour and commend political assassination. The assassination is significant as the *first serious Indian political crime committed*

outside India. The tale of outrage and assassination in India is well known and need not here be recapitulated. But it is equally well known that the incitements to crime have nowhere been more persistent and insidious than in London among the student class. Though policy may have dictated some restraint as to giving effect in the capital of Britain to the murderous doctrines inculcated, it has been feared in well- informed quarters for some time past that this immunity might not continue. Indeed, more than a year ago some public men of great prominence were privately warned that the question of 'removing' them was under the consideration of the Indian anarchists. It is understood that certain continental anarchists approached with a view to securing their cooperation, declined to give any aid on the ground that such action might prejudice the asylum they now obtain in this country.

"As in one or two cases, the proceedings of unknown Indians visiting the (India) Office had given ground for suspicion, it was found necessary to revise the rules regulating admission to see members of the council or prominent officials on the part of those not properly introduced. The rule referred to above has been resented by many of the well behaved students who have occasion to visit the India Office, but obviously it is necessary to take due precautions to prevent outrage upon officials in the discharge of their duties."

DHINGRA ON TRIAL

(DAILY NEWS, dated 17 July,1909)

"I understand that Dhingra before he was brought up at the *West Minister Police Court* on Saturday (10.7.1909) was approached by a solicitor (lawyer) at the instigation of a well known publicist and retired Anglo-Indian official of numerous activities, and others, but he (Dhingra) positively declined to accept their offer to provide him with legal

assistance. He remained standing through the long hearing in an *easy position and with an air of unconcern.*

"His gold rimmed spectacles which he is not allowed to wear in prison lest he should do himself injury, were restored for his appearance in court but his boots remained with laces...."

(g) The Indictment and Sentence

DHINGRA COMMITTED FOR TRIAL

(THE TIMES Dated 12.7.1909)

At the **Westminister Police Court** on 10th July,1909 before Mr. Horace Smith, the Indian student Madan Lal Dhingra, who is charged with the wilful murder of Sir Curzon Wylie and Dr. Cowasji Lalcaca, was brought up and after evidence was fully committed to take his trial.

"Sitting by the magistrate was Sir Edward Bradford late Commissioner, Police and Sir Charles Mathews, Director of Public Prosecutions occupied a seat at the counsel's bench.

"For some three years, he had, Mr. Bodkin said, been an Engineering student at University College and while there passed various examinations and secured certificates. Since Easter (Monday) last he had been lodging at the house of a Mrs. Harris at 108 Ledbury Road Bayswater. The first date he had to mention said counsel in connection with the tragedy was January 26 of the present year when the prisoner went to the Hatton-Garden Post office and obtained the necessary license to carry a revolver. Then he purchased at Gamages a very powerful Colt revolver and this was the one used on July 1 the date of the tragedy. It would be shown that the prisoner had regular practice with this weapon at an establishment known as 'Fun Land' in Tottenham Court Road and attained a considerable degree of proficiency. On the afternoon or evening of July 1 he was at this place and had the weapon cleaned and returned

to him. In addition to this revolver, the prisoner had another of Belgian make, the action being practically identical with that of the Colt. He also possessed a dagger and it was clear that with these three weapons he went to a concert or entertainment given in connection with the *National Indian Association* at the Imperial Institute. Mr. Bodkin proceeded to relate the details of the crime as brought out at the Coronor's inquests and then went on to say that certain documents and photographs found on the prisoner and at his lodgings would be produced, with a statement which bore upon the crime. From this it was clear that prisoner for sometime before July 1 pre-meditated some terrible crime; that he intended to commit that crime with a revolver; and that with regard to his action on July 1, he gave some opinions which he had formed as to India and as to the position of India; which clearly threw a light upon the reason which actuated him.

The first witness to be called was Sir **Lesley Probyn** (whose testimony had been reproduced in verbatim in the preceding section.)

OTHER EVIDENCE

Asked if he desired to question the witness, the prisoner replied, "I object to the use of the word murder, it was a thing that any Englishman would have done and was quite justified."

Mr. Madan Mohan Sinha, an Indian Law student repeated the evidence he gave at the inquest (Reproduced in preceding portion)

"This man is a traitor to my country" said the prisoner as Mr. Sinha's evidence was read over."

This was followed by the testimonies of D.W. Thornburn, a journalist, Captain Charles Rollesten, Miss Emma Josephine Beck, The Hony. Secretary of the eye-witnesses of the occasion. (Their respective testimonies had been reproduced in the preceding pages.) Then followed

the testimony of *John Stanton Stanley* (The substance of his testimony had been excerpted in preceding pages.) He produced the target used by Dhingra on his last visit on 1 July, 1909. There were 11 hits (out of 12) and 7 or 8 of these could be covered by a man's hand. The distance from the target was around 18 feet. Thus Dhingra had attained an excellent level of shooting accuracy.

"Dr. R.S. Trevor, pathologist at St. Gedrges' Hospital spoke as to the injuries sustained by Dr. Lalcaca and the post-mortem examination.

Dr. Thomas Meville, Police divisional surgeon said he saw the prisoner at the Wacton Street Police Station at 11.55 on the night of 1st July. His condition was normal and he said he was not hurt in any way and did not want the services of a doctor.

"A post-mortem examination of the body of Sir Wylie showed that the death was due to the injury to the brain."

Mrs. Harrie, the land lady of 108 Ledburry Road said she remembered that on July 1, the prisoner left the house at about 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon and returned at 6 p.m. Between 7 and 8 he went out again attired in his turban. The witness had never seen any firearms in prisoner's room, but once she saw a bullet and had told the police about it.

"Detective - Sergeant Eveleigh said that the pistol taken from the prisoner by Sir Lesley Probyn was handed to him and he found it contained an unspent cartridge. The magazine held 8 cartridges and another could be put in the chamber. The second pistol, which was found in the prisoner's pocket contained six cartridges in the magazine. The witness received this pistol with a dagger and several papers from Capt. Rolleston. In the prisoner's waist coat pocket were five cartridges.

The prisoner - "There were also two newspaper cuttings."

Sgt Eveleigh - "Yes."

Mr. Bodkin produced them and said they could be handed in if the prisoner wished it.

Dhingra replied he did not.

Detective Inspector Draper said he visited 108 Ledbery Road (residence of Dhingra) after the murder and searched the prisoner's room. He found a number of cartridges and a spare pistol magazine containing seven cartridges. He also found a letter purporting to be from Sir Wylie and addressed to the prisoner, several class cards from University College and a Punjab Certificate. In a locked box was a *statement on foolscap paper* and it was almost identical in language to the one *previously referred to* which was found on the prisoner.

Detective Inspector Mac Brian deposed to finding a cabinet photograph in the prisoner's room (This was produced, but was kept face downwards).

After evidence as to the purchase of a pistol at Gamage's and also of identification of the prisoner's handwriting by a clerk from University College Mr. Bodkin said this completed the case and he asked for prisoner's committal.

Mr. Horace Smith, in committing the accused gave the customary caution.

Indictment - Sentence (23 July 1909) (THE TIMES Dated 24 July, 1909)

"When Dhingra entered the dock, he looked as *cool as at the police court.* While before the jury, which was to finally pronounce upon his guilt or innocence he smiled and looked with interest round the court. The proceedings were conducted with greatest expedition. From the moment that Dhingra faced the court to plead to the indictment until he passed below a convicted man, only half an hour elapsed. The evidence was confined to the simple facts of the case, and no extraneous matter as for example, the seditious document which was found upon Dhingra when he was searched was admitted.

"The trial, too, was considerably shortened by the absence of cross-examination, no counsel apppearing for defence. Neither did the prisoner avail of his privilege of questioning the witnesses. As each witness completed his/her story each time Lord Alyerstonne, the Chief Justice would ask:- "Dhingra do you wish to put any question to the witness ?"

Each time Dhingra would gruffly say - 'No'.

From first to last, Dhingra's demeanour was of uncompromising hostility.

AN ACT OF PATRIOTISM

When at the outset the clerk of the court had read aloud the charges of wilful murder of Sir Curzon Wylie and of Dr. Lalcaca and demanded to know whether he was guilty or not guilty the prisoner immediately entered a protest. Leaning over the ledge of the dock he was gleaming angrily through his gold rimmed spectacles, made the reply:- "First of all I would say that these words (wilful murder) cannot be used with regard to me at all. It was an act of patriotism and I have got nothing further to say. The only thing I have got to say is contained in that statement which I believe you have got. You can do whatever you like with me. You white people are all powerful now and can do whatever you like, but remember *we shall have our time in the time to come.*"

The clerk of the court repeated, "Are you guilty or not guilty"?

"Well according to my view, I will plead 'not guilty', returned the prisoner. "Whatever I have to say is contained in my *statement* which was taken out of my pocket."Asked if he had any counsel to defend him, he replied he had not.

The prisoner was placed on his trial upon the indictment and coroners' inquisition charging him with

wilful murder of Sir Curzon Wylie.

The Lord Chief Justice:- "The prisoner can sit down."

Dhingra then took a seat between two warders and composed himself to listen to the opening speech of Sir William Robson, the Attorney General with whom was Sir A.H. Bodkin. Among those present was Sir Charles Mathews, the Public Prosecutor.

The court was not crowded, only those armed with a special permit being admitted.

In matter of fact tones, the Attorney General told the story of assassination. Said that the prisoner stood indicted for having on July 1 at the Imperial Institute at about 11'o clock in the evening wilfully murdered Sir Wylie. The evidence would show that at the same time he shot and killed Dr. Cowasji Lalcaca, a medical man practising at Shanghai who was on a visit to England and who had bravely intervened in order to try to protect Sir Wylie from the attack which was being made on him by the prisoner. Sir Wylie had served the Crown for many years in India in many capacities, holding high and responsible positions. At the time of his death he was political *Aid-de-Camp* to the Secretary of State for India.

The prisoner was a native of India of a respectable, honourable and loyal family. He had been in England as far as they know since Nov.1906. He has been a student at University College London where he had attended for three years a course of Engineering. At the time of the murder he was living at Bays Water. It would be shown to the jury clearly that the murder was carefully and apparently long pre-meditated. He need not dwell at all on the question of *motive*. In such circumstances as would be disclosed to the jury, motive of course was immaterial though as the case proceeded they would have little doubt about what the motive was. There was no pretence or ground for stating that either of the two gentlemen who were unfortunately killed had done the slightest personal wrong of any sort or kind to the prisoner or inflicted anything that the most sensitive imagination could construe as an injustice or wrong. On the contrary, as far as Sir Wylie was concerned, they would hear that his only relations with prisoner had been to offer him useful and personal kindness as an Indian resident in this country.

"From the purchase of a revolver license at Hatton Garden Post Office in January last, the Attorney General traced the various episodes which led up to the assassinations at the Imperial Institute on July 1. He spoke of the kindly letter written by Sir Wylie in April in which he informed the prisoner that he was going abroad for a short time, and would be glad to see him at the India Office on his return.

"The prisoner never called upon Sir Wylie "said the Attorney General speaking for the first time with dramatic emphasis. The only answer to his very kindly and friendly letter from Sir Wylie was given in the pistol shots at the Imperial Institute on July 1st ."

REVOLVER PRACTICE

"The first evidence they had relating to the prisoner as far as crime was concerned was in January 1909. He obtained at Hatton Garden Post Office a license to carry a revolver. He took it out in his own name and address. On the following day he went to the shop of Gamage (Limited) where pistols and guns were sold and producing the license purchased a Colt's automatic revolver for which he gave £3 . It was a very powerful and deadly weapon - a magazine pistol containing eight cartridges, which could be fired with great rapidity. The prisoner also had in his possession a Belgian revolver of similar make holding six cartridges and likewise a long dagger or knife.

"In March last, he became acquainted with Miss Beck,

the Hony. Secretary of most excellent association called the *National Indian Association.* He wrote to Miss Beck saying he had heard from his brother in India who wished him to go and see her. The association was formed under very distinguished patronage for the purpose of giving friendly help and counsel to Indian students in England and making them acquainted with each other and with English people, more particularly those English people who were interested officially and sympathetically with the welfare of India and Indian natives in England. It was under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen and also a great number of distinguished officials of the Indian Empire, among them was Sir Wylie whose name appeared as Hon. Treasurer of the Association.

"When the prisoner wrote to Miss Beck she replied that she would be very pleased if he would come and see them at the Association on the following Saturday. It appeared from a letter found at the prisoner's lodgings that Sir Wylie also wrote to the prisoner, having received a letter from a relation in India. (The Attorney General read the **letter of April 13** which has been published in *The Times*) (Reproduced below):

India Office,
Whitehall, S.W.
13th April, 1909
Dear Sir,

Your Brother Mr. K.L. Dhingra, whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making in England, has written to tell me that you are in London, and asking me to be of any assistance I can to you.

I expect to be abroad from the 15th to the 30th of April, but on my return I shall be very pleased to see you at the India Office if you can conveniently call between 11 and 1 or 2.30 and 3.30.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,
W.H.C. Wylie
Lt. Colonel

Madan Lal Dhingra Esq.

Envelope addressed:-

M.L. Dhingra Esq.
Engineering Student
University College,
Gower Street, W.C.

The prisoner called on Miss Beck but never on Sir Wylie. The only answer he made to the very kindly and friendly letter from Sir Wylie was given in the pistol shot at the Imperial Institute on Ist July. It was in April that the prisoner began to frequent a pistol range in Tottenham Court Road, near the University of London where he was studying. He went to a range, which was kept by a Mr. Morley, taking with him his own pistol and ammunition. He paid 6 d for each dozen shots. He fired by way of practice at a target. He practiced with great care and went to the range two or three times a week. He practiced rapid shooting and shooting at intervals and he improved very much in his shooting. In June last he received an invitation from Miss Beck to an evening concert or entertainment which was to take place at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, on the evening of Thursday, July 1. On the previous Monday the prisoner went to the shooting range and practiced as usual. After his practice he asked Mr. Morley, the keeper of the range, to clean out the pistol.

THE MURDER

On July 1, he left his lodgings about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and at about 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock he appeared at the shooting range and fired 12 shots as usual at a target, the range being about 18 feet. Eleven out of 12 of the shots took effect on the target, which was a small one. The full

outer circumference of it would be about the space occupied by a man's hand. At 7 o'clock he returned to his lodgings and left again at about 8.45 pm in a cab for the entertainment at the Institute. He took with him the Colt's revolver, the Belgian pistol - both fully loaded - and five extra cartridges in his waist-coat pocket, so that he would have material for 19 shots. He had also with him the long dagger or knife.

"Miss Beck saw him at the entertainment at 9 o'clock. Sir Wylie and the Lady Curzon Wylie did not arrive until about 10.30 pm. The prisoner seemed to engage in conversation with other Indian guests and displayed a perfectly calm and collected demeanour as he did throughout. At 10.40 pm he had a few words of conversation with Miss Beck about his work and examinations in a friendly and casual way. At 11 o'clock the prisoner was seen in the vestibule(entrance room) of the hall where the entertainment was proceeding as was also Sir Wylie. The prisoner and Sir Wylie were the only persons there at that time except Dr. Lalcaca. The entertainment took place in the Jehangir hall. A few minutes later the guests were dispersing. Lady Wylie had already gone downstairs to the entrance. Sir Wylie was standing near the doorway to the vestibule of the hall and was apparently conversing with the prisoner. The prisoner was seen suddenly to raise his hand with a pistol in it and to fire four or five shots rapidly at the head of Sir Wylie. Four of them took fatal effect and Sir Wylie collapsed and fell dead to the ground. The fifth shot grazed his cheek. The scene naturally caused horror among those present. Two other shots were fired at Dr. Lalcaca who had been the first to reach the prisoner, and he too fell, the shots having taken fatal effect. Sir Wylie fell dead. Dr. Lalcaca, who had not been hit in the head, survived a few minutes; he was medically attended, placed on an ambulance and taken to hospital, but died before he got there. After those seven

shots had been fired there remained still one cartridge left in the revolver. The prisoner turned the weapon on himself but that attempt at self-destruction failed because the pistol was so constructed that it required the pressure of a thumb against a spring in order to discharge it, which pressure could not be exerted when the pistol was pointed upward at himself. Various people including Sir Lesley Probyn rushed forward and seized the prisoner. Sir Lesley Probyn succeeded in getting the revolver from him and continued to struggle with him until the police arrived and took him to the station. The prisoner's manner after the act was apparently as composed at it had previously been. His spectacles had fallen off in the struggle. He asked for them quite composedly and they were given to him. He went quietly to the Police Station where he was charged with both murders. He nodded his head in assent. He was asked if he would like any of his friends communicated with, and he replied that it was not necessary as they would know it later on.

"When taken before the magistrate he was asked if he had anything to say in answer to the charge, and he replied:- 'The only thing I want to say is that there was no wilful murder in the case of Dr. Lalcaca. When he advanced to get hold of me, I simply fired in self-defence.'

The jury had heard what he had said in the dock that day. He had not denied firing the shots which caused death, but said that in his view that was not murder - therefore he had put on record a plea of 'Not Guilty'.

THE EVIDENCE

Evidence was then given.

Mrs. Harris, the prisoner's land lady, said that on July 1 the prisoner left her house in Ledbury Raod about 2 in the afternoon, came back about 7.30 and went out on a cab later on. She had never seen any firearm in his room.

The Lord Chief Justice asked the prisoner if he wished to put any question.

The prisoner - No I do not want to ask any question; I want to say something.

The Lord Chief Justice - You can say what you like afterwards. Do you want to ask any questions, now?

The prisoner - No, I do not.

(It was then followed by the evidence of the witnesses on the same lines as earlier.)

The Attorney General said he had concluded the case for the prosecution.

THE PRISONER'S STATEMENT

The Lord Chief Justice asked the prisoner whether he wished to go into the box or whether he would make a statement from the dock.

The prisoner- I have nothing to say. I admit that I did it. But I should like my statement read. The evidence is all true.

The Lord Chief Justice - Do you wish your statement read that you made at the police court?

The prisoner - Yes.

The statement (reproduced on previous pages) was then read by the clerk of the court.

The Lord Chief Justice - Do you wish to call any evidence?

The prisoner - I only want the statement to be read.

The Lord Chief Justice - Do you wish to say anything more ?

The prisoner - There is another *statement* on foolscap paper.

The Lord Chief Justice - Any other statement you must make now yourself.

The prisoner - But I do not remember it now.

The Lord Chief Justice - If there is anything you wish to say to the jury, say it now.

The prisoner - It (the statement) was taken from my pocket among other papers.

'I don't care what was taken from your pocket' declared the lordship impatiently, 'Anything you have to say you must say to the jury. What you have written on a previous occasion is no evidence in this case. If you wish to say anything in defence of yourself say it now." Have you anything more to say?

The court strained to hear what the prisoner might say. There was a pause and a tense silence.

Then Dhingra snapped out a sullen 'No' and closed his eyes as though he were tired of the whole proceedings.

His lordship at once proceeded to address the jury.

THE SUMMING UP

The Lord Chief Justice in summing up, said it was not necessary for him to detain them for more than a few seconds because he was very sure they had followed the evidence, which was, of course, absolutely conclusive. All that he had to say to them was that they had nothing to do as they already know- with any suggestion that there was any justification for this crime on political grounds. They had nothing to do with the suggestion made that he was justified in killing Sir Wylie as some other person might have been in killing some foreign subject who was walking about the streets of London. They had here got to deal with the case of an ordinary crime, by which as far as we knew a blameless man who had given his life to the public service and done an immense deal for the natives of this country of India, had lost his life. It was quite plain on the evidence before them that there had been considerable pre-meditation. They would remember that the only communication made by the deceased man to the prisoner was one of friendship, offering him kindness, having

received a letter from his brother. They had heard the evidence given before them - not one particle of which was questioned by the prisoner, for he had not asked a single question, although he was a man perfectly competent to ask any questions if he could have thrown any doubt upon the facts - that he purchased the revolver some weeks before and had been regularly practicing at the shooting gallery and had acquired considerable skill with the revolver. They had heard that he went to the Imperial Institute that night having upon him two revolvers, one with eight cartridges and the other with six and five other cartridges in his pocket, and the dagger - a dangerous weapon which had been produced before them. They had heard on the evidence of eye-witnesses that he was seen speaking to Sir Wylie to draw a revolver upon him, shoot at a distance of a few inches four shots - one in one eye, the other two by the ear and left temple, the last two bullets remaining in his body . Death, as they had heard, was absolutely instantaneous. It was not suggested, not could it be suggested that there was anything which could reduce the crime from murder to manslaughter.

(Note: The term manslaughter in British law is equivalent of section 304 of Indian Penal Code which denotes culpable homicide not amounting to murder. In plainer language it denotes that although the accused is guilty of killing the victim, but there are extenuating circumstance like grave and sudden provocation, sudden fight or an element of self-defence to which the accused over reacted thereby diluting the gravity of the crime).

It was not suggested that the prisoner did anything in self-defence *(Note :- this is not true as far as the murder of Dr. Lalcaca is concerned for which Dhingra did take the plea of self-defence.)*

On the contrary, with regard to Sir Wylie, the prisoner, having fired two other shots which killed another innocent

gentleman, said, as they had, "I did not intend to kill Dr. Lalcaca. I only fired at him in self-defence when he came to take hold of me.' - indicating as plainly as possible the distinction that he drew in his mind between the two cases. *(Note :- The court too had in fact conceded the distinction between the two murders when it had taken note of a long period of pre meditation in respect of Sir Wylie only. As for Dr. Lalcaca, he was just a chance visitor, and absolutely a fortuitous victim who even otherwise was a total stranger to Dhingra. The court should not have ignored this fact although it could yet hold Dhingra guilty of a wilful murder of Dr. Lalcaca too, as per its own interpretation of the relevant provisions of law.)*

It was not suggested by him that he was not sane and not in his right mind. The deliberations of his movements before showed that he was so. The statements that he made afterwards also showed that he knew perfectly well what he had done. It was, no part of his (the Lord Chief Justice's) duty to recall to their minds the evidence because they had heard it from the witness on oath in the last hour and a half. They had had it proved before them that this man drew this deadly weapon and fired, intending to kill, and did kill that poor gentleman who was his friend and against whom he had no right to have the slightest feeling of resentment. He only need tell the jury that which they knew perfectly well that the suggestion that there was 'justification' found no place in our Courts of Justice. If there were anything of the kind to be considered, it might be considered with reference to other matters - as for the carrying of sentences into effect but the jury had nothing to do with that. If on this evidence, which was absolutely un-contradicted, the jury was satisfied that the prisoner fired the pistol at that poor gentleman and had killed him, they had but one duty to perform and that was the duty which they were sworn on their oaths to perform - to return a verdict in accordance with the evidence, and he told them

that if they believed this evidence, the only possible verdict was of wilful murder.

VERDICT AND SENTENCE

(Note: As per English legal procedure in criminal trials, there are two distinct phases of proceedings, namely, establishment of guilt and awarding of sentence. As a rule, the former is strictly governed by law, while the latter has an element of flexibility and discretion. While deciding sentence for an accused, the court is expected to take into account factors like age, education, gender etc. The same very procedure is also followed in India.)

The jury after a short consultation in their box found the prisoner 'Guilty'.

The clerk of the court asked the prisoner if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed on him.

The prisoner - "What right have you to ask the question. I have told you that you can do whatever you like. I have told you over and over again that I do not acknowledge the authority of the Court. I do not mind you giving me sentence of death. I do not mind at all. I do not care, but remember that one day we shall be all powerful and then we can do what we like. That is all I want to say."

A smile of *contempt* flickered on the face of the condemned Indian as the judge donned the black cap.

(Note : Wearing of black cap is prescribed while pronouncing death sentence.)

The Lord Chief Justice addressing the prisoner said, "Madan Lal Dhingra no words of mine would have the slightest effect upon you. Nor do I intend to say anything more than to point out that you have been convicted on the clearest possible evidence of the brutal murder of an innocent man. The law enforces me to pass the only

sentence which is possible in such a case."

The Lord Chief Justice proceeded to pass sentence of death on the prisoner in the usual form.

The prisoner, making an Oriental salute *(as per Indian traditions)* to the judge said, "Thank you my Lord ! I don't care. I am proud to have the honour of laying down my life for the cause of my country."

The prisoner was then removed in the prisoner's van to Pentonville Jail where he was placed in the condemned cell *(The rooms in the jail meant for those awaiting death sentence).*

REPUDIAITION BY THE PRISONER'S FAMILY

Mr. Tindal Atkinson, KC, addressing the Lord Chief Justice said, "I have been instructed to watch this case on behalf of the family of the man who has just been convicted. *(Note : The family had engaged this lawyer only to watch and intervene only to disassociate the family from Madan Lal)*. I have been instructed to say that they view this crime with the greatest abhorrence and they wish to repudiate in the most emphatic way the slightest sympathy with the views or motives which have led up to the crime. Further, I am instructed to say on behalf of the father of this man and the rest of his family that there are no more loyal subjects of the Empire than they are."

The Lord Chief Justice - Mr. Tindal Atkinson, although the course may have seemed somewhat unusual (*Note : A judge is not supposed to express any personal opinion on such matters),* having regard to the nature of this crime, and the wicked attempt at justification in some quarters, I am very glad you should have said that on behalf of the members of the family.

(h) News Reports

News report in India

"The Pionener" Allahabad (dated 25th July, 1909)
THE LONDON ASSASSINATION
MADAN LAL SENTENCED

"The Old Bailey (Court) was crowded today (23 July,1909) when the trial of Madan Lal took place. Lord Alverstone presided. The Attorney General described the crime as long pre-meditated, with an obvious motive. Previous evidence was then repeated, and a verdict of guilty was returned. Lord Alverstone in sentencing Madan Lal to death said nothing he could say would have the slightest effect on the prisoner. After he had been sentenced Madan Lal saluted in military fashion and said "Thank You", my Lord; I am glad to have the honour of dying for my country."

Madan Lal was not defended, and refused counsel. His sole defence consisted in reading again his police court statement.

Mr. Horsley, the printer of Indian Sociologist, has been sentenced to four months imprisonment *(Note : for having published material justifying political murders).*

British Press Reports

The Daily Times (Dated 24th July,1909)

DHINGRA TO DIE

How he heard the death sentence

Dramatic Scene

ASSASSIN THANKS THE JUDGE

"Thank you my Lord. I do not care. I am proud to have the honour of laying down my life for the cause of my country." With his left hand at the salute and a grim look of defiance on his olive coloured face Madan Lal Dhingra thus addressed the Lord Chief Justice at the Old Bailey (Court) yesterday. A moment previously he had received death sentence....

THREE PRESS REPORTS ON EXECUTION which took place at 9 AM on 17th August (Tuesday) 1909

(A) (*ENGLISH MAIL* dated 20th August, 1909)

"At 9 o'clock on Tuesday morning Madan Lal Dhingra was punished by death for the dastardly assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie. He bore his fate with the same strange indifference which has characterized his conduct ever since the moment of the crime. He appeared to be still quite convinced of the innocence of his motives and to believe that he had performed an act of glory on behalf of his country.

Until within a few days of the execution the Home Office declined to make a definite announcement as to the murderer's fate but it was never seriously supposed that the government would decide to reprieve him. There was no public suggestion that the ordinary course of law should be altered. Indeed, it was felt that any show of such feelings would have been a lamentable expression of national weakness which would have done much harm to the always delicate position in India.

The affair was in a double sense a great tragedy and nearly everyone, whatever his views, is agreed that the terrible affair has been ended in the least unsatisfactory way."

(B) "DAILY CHRONICLE" (18th August 1909)

"EXECUTION OF DHINGRA

ASSASSIN OF SIR CURZON WYLIE DIES UNREPENTANT -

Stolid and defiant to the end, Madan Lal Dhingra, the Indian student was hanged yesterday morning in Pentonville Prison for the murder of Sir Wylie and of Dr. Lalcaca at the Imperial Institute on July 1st. Outside the prison a large crowd gathered to await the news that the execution had taken place, but there were very few Indians among those present.

The sentence was carried out of course with the strictest

privacy, only the Under Sheriff of London, Mr. Metfalf, the prison officials, and the Chaplain Rev. L.J. Hudson being present. Mr. Hudson took no part in attending the condemned man, Dhingra having refused to see him, or to accept any ministrations.

The assassin, it is announced, made no statement before death."

Dhingra's application to the Home Secretary to allow his body to be cremated was refused, and it will be buried, in accordance with the usual custom within the walls of the prison. During his incarceration the Indian had expressed a desire to see Mr. M.S. Master, an Indian Lecturer of Archway Road, High Gate. Mr. Master on Monday(16th August) made application to the Home Office for admission to the prison and received the following reply:-

"The Under Secretary is directed by the Secretary of State to say that he regrets that Mr. M.S. Master's request to be allowed to visit Dhingra cannot be complied with."

(C) *ENGLISH MAIL* (20th August 1909)

"EXECUTION OF DHINGRA

CALLOUS TO THE END

Madan Lal Dhingra, the young Indian student who murdered Sir Wylie and Dr, Lalcaca at the Imperial Institute suffered the extreme penalty of the law for his crime at Pentonville Prison on Tuesday.

On Saturday (14th August) an official intimation reached the Governor of Pentonville Prison from the Home Office to the effect that Home Secretary, after careful consideration of all the facts, had decided that law must take its course in case of the condemned student.

The convict maintained the same stolid demeanor that he evinced at the trial after the conviction, and expressed no contrition for the crime. Facilities were afforded of communicating with, or receiving visits from either relatives

or friends, but with the exception of two visits from one of the fellow compatriots the condemned man did not see anyone. *(Note : It is a misrepresentation of facts in view of preceding press report).*

During the period of his incarceration at Pentonville, the convict spent most of his time in reading principally magazines supplied from the prison library."

ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN A REPRIEVE

The family of Dhingra, aided by a few Englishmen, made strenuous endeavours to obtain his reprieve. They accumulated evidence to show that Dhingra had exhibited traces of madness, and gave one instance the fact that he cut off the whiskers of his land lady's cat when he first came to London.

His stoicism all through the trial, and even when he knew his doom, was typically Eastern *(Note : Eastern people, that is Asians are viewed as being indifferent to death).* As had been said, he paid the just penalty for his dastardly crime on Tuesday morning. The official announcement of the execution was displayed on the notice board outside the prison and surgeon of the prison testified in another official communication that Dhingra was dead. Only three prison officials were present in addition to Pierpont, the executioner.

REQUEST TO ATTEND REFUSED

A Mr. Master of Hyderabad who described himself as having come to England as the Edmund Burke Indian Lecturer, applied to the authorities to be admitted as a witness to execution but his request was firmly refused.

The Deputy Under Sheriff informed a Press representative that death was instantaneous and that Dhingra made no statement whatever.

He (Dhingra) seemed to have maintained the same

callous indifference to his fate that he displayed at the trial and after he was sentenced.

There was no demonstration outside the prison, although the authorities had taken all precautions in case there should have been several hundred people assembled, but only one of the Dhingra's compatriots was among the number. After the bell was tolled and the notice was posted the crowd quietly dispersed.

THE INQUEST

The inquest on the body of Dhingra was held by Mr. W. Sehroder shortly after noon in the committee room of the prison. Those present included Captain Hales the Deputy Governor (of the prison) and the only Indian admitted was Mr. Masters, a friend of Dhingra who represented the 'Parsee' (a journal) of Bombay. Three other Indian friends of Dhingra applied for admission to the inquest but were not admitted.

Signs of emotion were displayed by the Indian present at the inquest as he left the prison.

CREMATION DISALLOWED

Some of Dhingra's friends endeavoured at the last moment to get the body of the murderer cremated. They were prepared to bear the cost of cremation.

According to the English law the body of a murderer must be buried within the precincts of the prison and the authorities refused to deviate from the usual practice.

(i) His Family Reacts

HOW THE FAMILY REACTED

THREE PRESS REPORTS

(A) STORY OF DHINGRA'S HOME LIFE

His brother speaks of his eccentricities -

In a private letter from India to an acquaintance in

London, published in the *Daily Graphic* today, Mr. C.L. Dhingra brother of the murderer of Sir Wylie says:-

"You can imagine the terrible shock all the members of my family have received at the insane deed of my brother.

"My poor old father, who retired after serving the Government most loyally for thirty three years, and was feeling very happy and giving us much good education is simply stunned.

"Our family, as you would be reading the accounts in the papers, is, one of the most loyal family in the Punjab, and so very much attached to the Government that no one could have dreamed that a member of our family could have done such a foul deed."

MR. BHAJAN LAL DHINGRA

Another brother, who is resident in London (younger to Madan Lal) writes:-

"So far as I remember, my brother Madan Lal behaved himself in a very peculiar manner while he was still studying at the local college in Amritsar - Punjab.

"I believe it was in the year 1905 that I heard his class-fellows making remarks about his eccentricity and wild attitude towards them.

"I remember to have often seen him actually throttling the children of our family and when interfered with he would sometimes laugh and the next moment resent such interference and often threaten to use force against his elderly kinsmen.

"His frequent absence from home for days together without our knowledge was the cause of constant worry to the family."

"Immediately on my arrival in England I went to live with him in Weburn - Place, Russel Square, sometimes in July 1908 and there again I found him behaving in the same eccentric manner as he was doing at home.

"His queerness and extra-ordinary indifference did not escape the notice of the lodgers and the landlord and I remember being asked by the landlord if he ever suffered from mental disease."

SECRET LODGING

"This particular boarding house was closed and we had to move elsewhere but my brother would not only not tell me where he was moving to but asked me to find a place for myself, although he was fully aware that I was a stranger here.

"Since my separation I saw him twice or thrice at the University College, for that was his only address known to me. My visit produced somewhat uneasiness in his mind, and when I told him that my father was anxious to know about his studies, he replied very rudely that I had better mind my own business.

"So far as I know he seldom wrote to my father unless he was in need of money. He was neither extravagant nor fond of luxury.

"The last I saw him before the terrible tragedy was at a meeting of the National Indian Association in Caxton Hall and there too he did not care to speak to me.

"My own impression ever since I came to London was that his eccentricity and mental defect was more on the increase and that my father was quite mistaken to have supposed that his sojourn in England would any way improve him.

"My first thought the moment I read of the murders in the papers was that he must have acted in a fit of madness.

"I accordingly wrote a letter following the tragedy to the Inspector of Westminister Police, pointing out that he was eccentric and mentally defective.

"I have omitted to mention that I attempted to interview him at the prison twice, but he absolutely declined to see or communicate with me."

The press report concludes with the observation: "It is understood that the above facts have been represented to the Home Secretary."

(B) *INDIAN DAILY NEWS* (10th July 1909)
(SIMLA - JULY 9th)
DHINGRA'S BROTHERS VISIT SIMLA

Doctors M.L. and B.L.Dhingra, brothers of Madan Lal were on a recent visit to Simla deputed by their father to interview the Private Secretary to the Viceroy. They expressed the abhorrence of the family at the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie and assured the Private Secretary that their brother was highly eccentric and was in the clutches of India House. They begged that the outrage be most carefully enquired into as they were convinced of a widespread conspiracy.

DHINGRA'S ALLEGED ECCENTRICITY

"Dr. Sahib Ditta Dhingra father of the assassin has also written to say that Madan Lal, his son, had always been peculiar in his ways and never wrote to India except for money. Dr. Sahib Ditta Dhingra also says that he had been trying his best to dissuade him from evil company as that of Krishna Varma and India House and asked Sir Curzon Wylie to use his influence with Madan. He feels it difficult to express the shock he has received in his old age which has brought unnumbered woes to the family which has all along been loyal and grateful to the government."

DHINGRA'S BROTHERS

"Madan Lal has five brothers viz Kundan Lal Dhingra, engaged in business in London, Mohan Lal Dhingra, Health Officer Amritsar, Chaman Lal Dhingra Bar at Law at Amritsar, Behari lal Dhingra,Chief Medical Officer, Jind

State and Bhajan Lal Dhingra a student in London."

THE ASSASSIN'S ENGLAND LIFE

"The murderer as has already been said in these columns passed his Intermediate Arts(F.A.) examination from the Municipal College Amritsar and then joined the Government College Lahore.

"Further facts with regard to have shown that he took interest in nothing and brooded a great deal. He left college and worked in one or two minor posts. After sometime he ran away from the home and worked as a *lascar* (sailor). Finally his father's consent was obtained under great persuasion to his going to England to study engineering. He was so eccentric that during the first week of his stay in England he cut off the whiskers of the pet cat of his land-lady of his lodgings and when remonstrated left the house.

FAMILY'S SHAME

"The brothers who have visited Simla have begged that the family's feeling of shame be conveyed to Lord Morley, the British public and their deep sympathy to Lady Curzon Wylie.

"The brothers of Dhingra are convinced that there is something behind and they say - "We believe that the real culprits have cleverly kept themselves in the background. They have succeeded in utilizing a member of a loyal family for their evil purpose and they have wrecked three families. Sir Curzon Wylie's, Dr. Lalcacas's and ours. They have cast a stigma on our family's name but we shall not consider Madan Lal a martyr as the extremists would desire. We look upon him as a lunatic who could not be influenced by the traditions and instincts of the family and his act as a detestable act.

"May God punish the real culprits and throw light so that everybody may be judged correctly."

(j) Was Dhingra mad? - Father's story of his son's eccentricities

PRANKS IN LODGINGS

"The Home Secretary, we understand is still making inquiries into the state of mind of Dhingra, whose execution for the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie is fixed for August 17.

"Mr. Gladstone is personally giving the matter most painstaking consideration.Important documents bearing on the condemned man's career have reached the Home Office from Dhingra's family in India.Dhingra's father, who served the British Government of India for thirty three years, and is one of the most highly respected medical men in the Punjab, the title of *Rai Sahib* being conferred upon him for his services by lord Elgin, gives a number of instances of his son's eccentricities.

"Madan Lal, he says, was born in 1883. He showed eccentric disposition from early childhood, and his habits and ways were different from those of other boys of his age.

"He showed indifference to everything - as regards his own requirements and regarding the pain and pleasures of others.

"For instance, he would seldom inquire after a sick relative. During one of his mother's serious prolonged illness, when distant relatives came to make inquiries, he showed absolute indifference and never once entered the sick room.

"As another illustration it may be mentioned that on the occasion of the death of his brother's wife, when the whole family was in deep mourning he was observed promenading and whistling in the street close by in a careless manner."

SHUT HIMSELF UP

"On another occasion he shut himself up in a room

for an imaginary wrong for over twenty four hours, and the door had to be forced open.

"When about 22 (in the year 1905) he ran away from home and was not heard of for some months. He went to Burma and other places, and then went on board ship to work as a lascar. He came back to India after sometime and wired for money from Ceylon.

"He returned home and found to be as eccentric as ever. At times he would get into fits of uncontrollable temper. His behaviour in general was so eccentric that one of his doctor brothers (Dr. Behari lal Dhingra) induced me to send him to England on medical grounds, as he believed that the English climate and environment, with study for a profession would be beneficial to him."

DHINGRA AND THE CAT

"Madan Lal left for England in May 1906. He made an exhibition of eccentricity in London during the very first week of his stay there by cutting off the whiskers of the pet cat of the land-lady, and when remonstrated with he left the house. My son Kundan Lal Dhingra, who was then in England, wrote home to say the landlady of another house in which Madan Lal went to stay complained about his eccentricities.

"During his stay of three years in London he wrote to me on average one letter in three months and that too in a very uncommunicative manner.....

"My younger son Bhajan Lal Dhingra, who is now in London has also been complaining of Madan Lal's indifference to him.

"Dr. Dhingra also says that his son had absolutely no political training in India and never took the slightest part in any political movement.

"Sir Curzon Wylie" he declares, "was a kind friend of the family. His intercession was sought as a friend, and in

the letter to Sir Curzon it was mentioned that Madan Lal was a young man of eccentric and wayward habits."

LETTERS FROM SIR CURZON WYLIE

"Amongst the documents(being examined by the Home Secretary) are copies of two letters which Sir Curzon Wylie wrote to Dhingra's brother.In one dated April 13, Sir Wylie said he had written to Madan Lal at University College saying he would be glad to make his acquaintance. "You may be sure" he added, "I will do what I can for him if he gives me the opportunity".

"On May 6,Sir Curzon wrote that he had received no reply nor had Dhingra called, and as he feared, that any further advances on his part might be misunderstood he was afraid he could do no more in the matter.

"The letters go to confirm the announcement we made at the time of Dhingra's arrest that Sir Curzon and the assassin had never met before the night of the crime.

"In another document Mr. Kundan Lal Dhingra bears out the statements of his father with regard to eccentricities of Madan Lal.

"Harichand Chopra a retired extra-Assistant-Commissioner, in a letter to Dr. Dhingra, a copy of which has been sent to England says, " I was very sorry indeed for poor Madan Lal's fate. He was really half mad when I met him last at Simla in the Tonga Service. *(Note : As per Indian Daily News of July 6 1909, Madan Lal was employed for sometime in the Kalka Simla Tonga Service under Rai Bahadur Daulat Ram).* It was, I am sure for the fact that he did this shameful act."

"It is surmised that the British authorities took care to ascertain the precise mental state of Dhingra vide the report *of medical officer reproduced below*".

REPORT OF PRISON MEDICAL OFFICER

(Part of Offical Judicial Record)

H.M. Prison, Brixton,
July 22nd, 1909
MEMORANDUM
Rog. 9493 MADAN LAL DHINGRA

This man has been in Hospital under my close supervision and observation since his reception here on July 2nd 1909. I have seen him every day, and have had several prolonged interviews with him, the last this morning (Thursday July 22nd).

His general health is very fair, and he tells me that with the exception of occasional but slight attacks of Malaria when in India he has always had good health.

He is well educated, and of an intellectual type, somewhat reticent in conversation, and retiring in manner.

He eats and sleeps well, converses quite rationally and sensibly on all topics, has behaved generally in quite a sane and normal manner, and during the time he has been under my care he has shown no signs nor symptoms of insanity.

S.R. DYER, M.D.
Medical Officer

(k) Press comments on the Dhingra family's stance

(INDIAN DAILY NEWS dated 6 July in a despatch from Shimla)

(Only Excerpts)

"The fact remains that a three years stay in England can expose a young man of a highly respectable and loyal family of the position and antecedents of the Dhingra family to such influences as to unhinge or poison his mind and make it possible for him to stand in the unenviable position he now occupies. The spectacle is so extremely distressing that we think it ought not to fail to awaken all parents who

have sons in England to the necessity of using and maintaining intact their sobering and friendly influences over them. We trust for the good name of our students abroad that cases of mental aberration or perverse headedness are not many but whether few or many, it is time that parents fully realized their duty in the matter. It would be a pity indeed if the occurrence of a solitary case like the Imperial Institute tragedy led Englishmen to shut the doors of their houses or the portals of their institutions against any considerable body of Indians in England whether students or others. Such a step would seriously handicap our young men in their efforts to obtain academic laurels, but the best way to prevent such a catastrophe, is to take timely measures to keep our students from evil or poisonous influences.

"The ill fated young man who stands charged with the murder of two human beings perhaps scarcely realizes, the degree of grief and sorrow into which, he has plunged his family on which the news has come like a veritable bolt from the blue. Dr. Sahib Ditta Dhingra, *Rai Sahib* of Amritsar, the afflicted father, served the Government for 30 years as Assistant and Civil Surgeon and displayed the most steadfast loyalty throughout his career in Government service and after.....

"It is to say the least tragic in the extreme that a young man with the traditions and instincts of such a loyal and faithful family before him should find himself arraigned in a court of law in England on a charge of having shot an English official and a brother Indian.....

"Apart from the antecedents of the family to which the young man belonged there were other circumstances which should have made it impossible for the young man to have acted in the way he did. Madan Lal Dhingra, a young man of 22, passed his Intermediate in Arts from Amritsar, studied for some time at Lahore, served for

sometime in the Kashmir Settlement Department, was employed for sometime in the Kalka-Shimla Tonga Service under Rai Bahadur Daulat Ram, and then went over to England three years ago to study Mechanical Engineering and was due to return to India October next..."

(l) The "Other" Statement - The Press Reports

THE STATEMENT RECOVERED FROM DHINGRA'S POCKET AND ALSO FROM HIS ROOM

(i) PRESS REPORTS REGARDING THE STATEMENT

"THE TIMES" Dated 3.7.1909

"We do not forget that Dhingra is an untried prisoner and we should regret to say anything which might tend to deprive him of the fair and impartial trial which is his right. It would, however, be idle prudery to refrain from all comment upon notorious facts or to refuse to recognize certain broad conclusions to which they point. On such evidence as we possess the crime is almost certainly political. It is of the same type as the long list of murders and outrages which have disgraced India during the last two years. *(Note:- This is a highly exaggerated version of the actual episodes of a grave nature. As per official records, only one such occurrence took place during this period - Muzzaffarpore Bomb Case, killing of two ladies on 30th April 1908. Alipore Bomb case which was based only on recovery of a bomb factory in the wake of the incident of 30th April 1908, does not fall is that category. Of course, there were a number of 'Conspiracy" cases and "Sedition" cases more out of apprehension of trouble and mostly resulting in acquittals).* That is the view which the Prime Minister, himself an accomplished lawyer, has not hesitated to express in his speech at Stockport last night. "It is" he says, "a startling and emphatic piece of evidence as to the character and the methods of the conspiracy, happily confined to a small number of people, but desperate and determined in methods which I felt it my duty a few

days ago to describe in the House of Commons. A paper is said to have been found upon the prisoner, which lays down the doctrine that British rule in India is unjust and iniquitous and that all means are legitimate to throw it off. The document declares further we are told, that if only all Indian students had the spirit of the writer and were ready to imitate his action at all hazards, the liberation of India would speedily follow.

"This paper may be or may not be admissible at the trial but if it really has been found upon the accused, it affords a sufficient explanation of his act. *(Note : It is followed by correlating its contents with the July Number of Indian Sociologist, which had been substantially reproduced in the earlier portion of this publication).*

(ii) IN THE COURT OF LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

(*THE TIMES*, dated 24.7.1909)

The Lord Chief Justice - (addressing the prisoner) - Do you wish to give evidence in the box or say what you have to say here?

The prisoner - I have nothing to say. I admit that I did it. This evidence is all true. I should like my statement read. (This reference was to his statement made earlier in the Police Court. Accordingly that statement was read).

The Lord Chief Justice - Do you wish to call any evidence?

The Prisoner - No, I only want the statement to be read.

The Lord Chief Justice - Do you wish to say anything more?

The prisoner- There is another statement on foolscap paper.

The Lord Chief Justice - Any other statement you must make now yourself.

The Prisoner - But I don't remember it now.

The Lord Chief Justice - Is there anything you wish to

say to the jury; say it now.

The prisoner - It (the statement) was taken from my pocket among other papers.

The Lord Chief Justice - I don't care what was in your pocket. The question of what you have written before we have nothing to do with. You must say what you wish to say to the jury now. Do you wish to say anything more?

The prisoner - No

(iii) LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES published on 19.08.1909,

Written by one Fredric Mackarness

"The case for the Crown alike at the inquisition before the coroner, at the hearing before the magistrate and at the trial before the Lord Chief Justice was that the murder had been the isolated and independent act of the accused. No evidence was suggested to show a conspiracy of Dhingra with any one of his compatriots or his association with any anarchical body. The columns of THE TIMES have duly recorded the police evidence to this effect given in the clearest possible terms.

"Dhingra's own evidence in the course of proceedings entirely bore out this view; and in today's press there is published a statement drawn up by him, though not read at the trial, which opens as follows:-

"I admit the other day I attempted to shed English blood as an humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths. In this attempt I have consulted none, but my own conscience. I have conspired with none but my own duty."

"The official view finally adopted by the Government was stated less than a fortnight ago by the Under Secretary for India. In his carefully prepared speech on the Indian Budget , the Master of Elibank used these words about Dhingra's crime:-

"Though the terrible tragedy came as a shock to the civilized world, yet the British people would be right to regard it as the isolated action of a fanatic and not connected with any general widespread conspiracy against the British nation.

(iv) POLITICAL NOTES - DHINGRA'S ALLEGED STATEMENT

(*THE TIMES* of 20.8.1909)

The statement which it is alleged Dhingra committed to writing before his execution (arrest) was found in his room. There is every reason to believe that he did not compose it but that it was composed by those who egged him on to commit murder. The statement found in Dhingra's room was at once taken into possession and it has been shown to none outside the official circle. Yet, nonetheless, copies of this statement have been given to various persons and at least to one newspaper.

"These circumstances, it is pointed out, afford proof, that the statement found in Dhingra's room was a copy of document the original of which is in the hands of others. Moreover, the style of the composition of the statement is entirely unlike the style of Dhingra's statement before the magistrate. Copies of the document it is stated, have been received by some persons in this country from Paris."

(v) REJOINDER TO THE LETTER OF MR. FREDRIC MACKARNESS

"The answer to Mr. Fredric Mackarness M.P. whose letter you have published this morning, is furnished by an article which appeared in the DAILY NEWS of yesterday and which I enclose for your perusal.

"You will see that your contemporary declares

(1) That Dhingra drew up his statement containing the assertion that he had conspired with none before the murder, intending it to be read as if it had been subsequently drawn up.

(2) "That a copy of this statement had been for

sometime in the possession of certain of Dhingra's compatriots.

"It seems impossible that these compatriots should have obtained a copy after Dhingra's arrest, and if so, it follows that there was someone who knew of murderer's intention before he committed his ghastly crime.

"It also appears to be within the power of the Daily News to indicate who possessed the copy of the statement which that paper above was able to publish."

(vi) AN AMAZING DOCUMENT(THE ENGLISH MAIL OF 20.8.1909)

"During the last few days a document bearing no signatures and no publisher's imprint has been circulated amongst Indian students in London. It purports to give the statement which was found in Dhingra's room by the police, and begins as follows:- "For the reasons which even they have not been shameless to reveal, the British Government have refused, inspite of his persistent demand to do so, the statement of the Indian martyr, Madan Lal Dhingra. It proceeds to glorify the crime."

"The Police are making active inquiries as to the author of this document. It is obviously written by an Oriental (Indian).

(vii) *Name of the paper illegible* (dated 24th July, 1909)

"At the final trial Dhingra would have liked to hear a statement which he wrote before setting out on his mission of assassination read in the court. This was not allowed and whatever the document may have contained, there can be no doubt that its publication had been rightly prohibited. If, as it is unlikely, it gives any clue to the murderer's accomplices and instigators the authorities will know how to use it. Should it be nothing more than a wild attempt to glorify in the name of patriotism, what the Lord Chief Justice in his summing up, properly described as brutal and cold-blooded murder, or what is not at all improbable, if it is only a glib repetition of the monstrous doctrine avowed by men of Krishna Varma's type, the endeavour that will no doubt be made to exalt the assassin in the eyes of his countrymen, as the champion of their supposed grievances, would be facilitated by giving publicity to his sayings.

"This danger must not be overlooked. There has, indeed been a very general expression of abhorrence of the crime and its motives among all classes of the Indian people. It would be unfair to suspect the sincerity of the many well disposed Indians who have joined with Englishmen in deploring the outrage. Yet the spirit which prompted Dhingra is not yet extinct, nor will it be exorcised when he has paid the penalty of his crime. He may or may not have been speaking with knowledge when, after hearing the jury's verdict, he said, - "*You may do what you like, but remember we shall have our time.*" That may have been the ferocious boast of a desperate man who would be puzzled to name anyone among his acquaintances as dangerous as himself for all that, there are others besides Dhingra whose minds have been poisoned by the sedition instilled into them; and who need but little encouragement to emulate his detestable exploit. And though the open promulgation of the principles which he carried into practice may be checked for a time, a death dealing plot against Englishmen connected with the British Government of India has yet to be fully exposed and the conspirators silenced."

(viii) INDIAN SEDITION CAMPAIGN IN AMERICA (*ENGLISH MAIL*, 20.8.1909)

"It has been telegraphed from New York that simultaneously with the execution of Dhingra printed circulars were addressed to leading American papers purporting to contain a 'statement' by him in defence of his act, and the transmitter of this circular which was written in typical 'Babu' English *(a derogatory allusion to the Indians' English)*, appealed to the American press to publish this

'statement' in explanation of the killing of Sir Curzon Wylie "by the Indian Martyr Dhingra."

Whether Dhingra wrote the statement originally or otherwise is not important, but an organised attempt to secure sympathy with the Indian cause in America, as in the present case, is no new thing. It began in New York, with branches in other parts of the USA last year and the propaganda was conducted chiefly by means of young Indians, who went there, and wrote countless letters to the newspapers attacking the English administration in India as "brutal" 'inhuman' and so forth. Hundreds of these letters were published. An attempt to secure subscriptions there, and to export arms, was also made but failed. Bearing in mind average Americans, particularly those of foreign origin, know very little of India, these letters if answered would have had a mischievous tendency. American newspapers, however, are usually very fair and they publish complete detailed replies from well-informed correspondents, with the result that the Indians in the United States concluded that a Press campaign was not altogether good policy, and despite this week's attempt by sympathizers with Dhingra to nobble American newspapers and American sympathy, it is hardly likely to be repeated on an organised scale.

CHAPTER 3

"Those who turn loyalist today because it pays them to do so, will turn patriot tomorrow should patriotism pay them later on." (Swaraj, June 16, 1909)

THE PERSPECTIVE

Madan Lal Dhingra had convincingly hit the British Imperialism very hard. Along with this was thoroughly exploded the myth of invincibility of the British Empire. The British rule had consolidated itself through a struggle spread over one and half centuries and finally proclaimed itself in saddle on November 1, 1858. They had reached this stage after curbing strong opposition from the natives and a major revolt in 1857. This process had created resistance, discontent and resentment at every stage in the form of civil rebellions, tribal uprisings and peasant movements[1].

The British came to India for trade and to brighten their fortunes. As shrewd businessmen, they tried to mix up with the local people, respected their customs and appreciated their feelings so as to gain maximum out of them. This went on till the middle of the nineteenth century. More and more British people started coming to India. To safeguard their trade interests, they started nourishing the ambition of having full control on the Indian territory. The process was complete in 1849 when, Punjab, the only area out of their reach, was also annexed. Henry Lawrence, who took charge of Punjab in 1849, expressed that 'we cannot expect to hold India for ever. Let us conduct ourselves.. as, when the connexion ceases, it may do so not with convulsions but with mutual esteem and affection, and the England may then have in India a noble ally, enlightened

and brought into the scale of nations under the guidance and fostering care.'[2] But this sentiment started evaporating soon after. The mutual esteem was replaced by arrogant insensitivity. The British preferred to consider Indians as their subjects and inferiors and also believed that they deserved loyalty and obedience from Indians naturally as a matter of right. The relationship between British people coming to India and the Indian masses had thereby become strained. This disaffection grew more and more as the nineteenth century drew to a close.

Indians started probing the process of colonization of India and it's adverse effects on the country. The poverty, hunger and disease had gripped a large number of people. Their condition was becoming more and more pitiable. The yoke of foreign rule seemed to have squeezed them. The intellectuals were trying to understand the causes thereof and also making their findings public. The seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century was the period when an idea of India as a Nation was gaining ground. The period from 1875 to 1905 was the period of 'intellectual unrest and of spreading national conciousness.'[3] The peasants, the tribal and religious groups here and there were rising up against the British Raj with almost no common chord among each other. It was during this period that the need was felt that India must have a common national organization to put forward the national issues from a single platform. These efforts bore fruit and Indian National Congress was launched in 1885. The Congress did provide a platform for the whole of the India and did contribute in developing and shaping India as a Nation. The intellectuals connected with Congress and even those from out of it raised their voices against the misrule and insensitivity of the State towards the poor. They also spoke against the economic exploitation and oppression of the masses. The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed Bengal

partition and its bloody after effects, launching of Swadeshi movement and the peasant unrest in Punjab. The people had stood up as one person. British repression was also at its worst. Congress too had its own ideological problems. They were for the amelioration of the poor but were also professing loyalty towards the British rule. A sizeable section within the Congress had been opposing this and recommending the adoption of a decisively fighting posture towards British and propagating a kind of self-rule.

Perhaps, much later in 1929, the situation was aptly explained in a declaration written by Gandhi Ji which reads as: 'The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *purna swaraj* or complete independence. We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country.[4] This 'disaster' was happening to Indians since long.

Not only the Indians but even the British people had given vent to such feelings. The unrest that prevailed in India during the years 1905 - 1908 was felt by the first chairman of the British Parliamentary Labour Party James Keir Hardie, who visited India in September and October 1907 and he publicly accused Britain of running India 'like the Czar runs Russia.'[5] This objective observation was not liked by the British people. The King George V, who had visited India as Prince of Wales at the time of the partition of Bengal, entered his impressions in his diary and commented that 'Evidently, we are too much inclined to look upon them as a conquered and down-trodden race and the native, who is becoming more and more educated, realizes this.'[6]

Madan Lal Dhingra, born in 1883 to a rich and loyal family of Amritsar, Punjab, perhaps, was the 'Native' who had become 'educated' and had very deeply 'realized' this.

Dhingra made a statement before the court and expressed that he was a patriot and working for the emancipation of his motherland.[7] Anguished at the plight of his countrymen and to lend voice to their resentment he acted. He said that 'I do not want to say anything in defense of myself, but simply to prove the justice of my deed. As for myself, I do not think that any English Law court has any authority to arrest me or detain me in prison, or to pass sentence of death on me. That is the reason I did not have any counsel to defend me.' He maintained that 'it was much more justifiable and patriotic' to fight the English out. He held that the English people are 'responsible for the murder of 80,000,000 of my countrymen in India in the last fifty years, and they are also responsible for taking away £ 100,000,000 every year from India to this country.' The tyranny of economic loot and repression let loose on the people of India found significant place in his charge-sheet of English. Sharpening the attack further, he argued that the English are also responsible for hanging and deportation of patriotic Indians who, he was convinced 'are doing the same as English people are advising their country to do.' Dhingra was in a way explaining the kind of drain of money and resources that is caused by the very presence of English men in India under this colonial rule when he stated that 'And if an Englishman who goes out to India, and, say, gets £ 100 a month, that simply means he passes sentence of death upon 1,000 of my poor countrymen, for 1,000 of these poor people can very easily live upon the £ 100 which the Englishman spends mostly on his frivolities and pleasure.'

This was a strong indictment of the British Raj in India. The enlightened people and leaders initially had a positive attitude towards the British but the slow progress and rather 'regression and underdevelopment disillusioned'[8] them. The economic policy of British was put to minute scrutiny. Many Indian intellectuals studied the process during the years 1870-1905 and found out that colonialism was the major cause of stagnant economic development in India. They discovered that the colonialism had transformed its old methodology of effecting economic subjugation, and it 'operated through more disguised and complex mechanism of free trade and foreign capital investment.'[9]

Dada Bhai Naoroji was one such leading personality also known as Grand Old Man of India. He devoted his entire life to sensitize people on the causes of poverty and ways to get rid of it. He made people to wakeup and know the 'wretched, heart-rending, blood boiling condition of India.'[10] He argued that 'the Indian was starving, and living on insufficient food. He propounded the 'Drain Theory' in 1867. Naoroji and others felt that foreign capital, suppressed the Indian capital instead of encouraging and augmenting it and also led to Drain of capital from India to England. The interests of England were safeguarded. Naoroji declared that the Drain was the basic cause of Indian poverty. He refuted the claims of British rulers that they were there in India for the beneficence of India. In fact the British had been proclaiming from the rooftop that the India was a very backward country and they had brought to India modern education, communication and telegraph and railways. All these had changed the fortunes of Indians and changed it for better and they should in turn be grateful and also profess unquestioned loyalty towards British. Unsure of themselves, to propagate and perpetuate the British rule, they had introduced chapters in the syllabi and courses in the schools on 'Blessings of English Rule' *(Angrezi*

Raj Ki Barkaten).

The Nationalists had another point of view. Dada Bhai Naoroji felt that the face of beneficence was a mask behind which the exploitation of the country was carried on by the British. Macauley's system of education was specially designed for a few belonging to upper classes in order to prepare them to occupy junior positions in the government offices. The indigenous educational system was ignored and it died of neglect. G.V. Joshi, another eminent economist remarked that 'expenditure on railways should be seen as Indian subsidies to British industries.' Railways did not respond to the needs of Indian industry. The benefits of railways had gone largely to the British and they were experiencing 'commercial revolution.' As Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a fire-brand Congress leader put it, it was like 'decorating another's wife.'[11]

Another economist R.C. Dutt, who had served British India as an ICS officer explains this Drain theory in his book 'Economic History of India' and it reads 'Taxation raised by a king, says the Indian poet, is like the moisture sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilizing rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilizing rain largely on other lands, not on India... So great an Economic Drain out of the resources of a land would impoverish the most prosperous countries on earth; it has reduced India to a land of famines more frequent, more widespread, and more fatal, than any known before in the history of India, or of the world.'[12]

Then what remained of the claims of British that they had ensured safety and security of life and property ? Dada Bhai Naoroji wrote 'there is security of life and property in one sense of the way, i.e..., the people are secure from any violence from each other or from native despots... But from England's own grasp there is no security of property at all, and as a consequence, no security for life... what is secure, and well secure, is that England is perfectly safe and secure.. to carry away from India, and to eat up in India, her property at the present rate of 30,000,000 or 40,000,000 £ a year... To millions in India life is simply 'half feeding', or starvation, or famine and disease.'[13] Tilak's paper Kesari on 28.1.1896 had rightly commented that 'surely India is treated as a vast pasture for Europeans to feed upon'.

Dhingra's act and his statement brought all these facts to the fore and were shocking to the world outside. What the nationalists had been saying and what the Indian members of the Legislative Council in India had been speaking while debating budgets was further corroborated by statements of the government made in House of Commons. In response to a question by Mr. Kennedy (Cavan, W., Nat.) asked from Under Secretary of State for India, the Master of Elibank replied that 'the gross revenue received in India in 1908-1909 according to revised estimates was £ 69,035,100 of which 45 millions was allocated to Imperial and about 24 millions to provincial purposes. These figures include considerable receipts which are not taxation.'[14] Any one can imagine what were the "Imperial purposes."

Dr. Rutherford, an MP, asked the Under Secretary of State for India how many famines there were in India during 25 years ending in 1887 and in 1907, respectively, with the official estimate of the loss of life involved during each period; and the names of the provinces which suffered most severely. The Master of Elibank answered that 'omitting the droughts of limited extent, there were four great famines till 1887. The Orissa famine of 1865, the Northern India & Rajputana famine of 1868-70, the Behar famine of 1873, the Southern India famine 1876-78. The famine commission of 1880 estimated the mortality in British India in these four famines at about 8,000,000 in excess of the normal. Much of the excess mortality was due to epidemic diseases

obscurely connected with seasons of drought and privation.

'In the second period, there have been four great famines the Upper India and Central Provinces famine of 1895 which extended to Madras and Bombay, and to Bengal and the Punjab, the Rajputana and Central India famine of 1899, which also affected Bombay and Central Provinces, the Gujarat famine of 1899-1902, the United Provinces famine of 1907, which extended to parts of Central Provinces and Punjab.

'The excess mortality in British India in 1895 has been estimated at 750,000, and in 1907 at 1,000,000. In 1907, famine in the United Provinces the provincial death rate was 36.47 per 1000 against a normal of 34.59 but there were only 11 deaths which after full inquiry could be attributed to want of food.'[15] It is amazing when people were dying during famine in lakhs in excess to the normal, only 11 deaths were found to be due to the want of food in a governmental investigation!

Mr. Surendernath Banerjee, a renowned leader of the Indians and an ex-president of Indian National Congress, was in London at the time of Wylie's killing. In one of the meetings while addressing the Indian students he identified poverty as the problem of problems. Though he denounced Dhingra's act, but ironically he was standing on the side of what Dhingra had stated with regards to the strain that the presence of Englishmen exerted on Indians. Mr. Banerjee remarked in his address that 'at this stage question of Socialism or Individualism did not arise. The problem of problems for them was the poverty of many millions of their countrymen. The poverty was largely due to the enormous political and commercial drain to this country. Year by year the political drain amounted to £30,000,000 and the commercial drain to £ 40,000,000. It was the awful drain, that had now gone on for more than a century that had contributed to the deplorable poverty among their people....

The home charges could only be stopped or reduced by the larger employment of Indians in the service of the State. The commercial drain could only be stopped by promotion of *Swadeshi*. This, had been the process of evolution, he reminded them, in Japan.'[16]

Dhingra, while referring to the oppression by the state expressed his 'surprise' over the 'terrible hypocrisy farce and mockery of the English people' for they projected themselves as the 'Champions of oppressed humanity'. He was indicating towards the English stand in favour of people of Congo and Russia. He considered it so incongruent in view of 'terrible oppression and horrible atrocities committed in India' like killing of 2,000,000 of people every year and outraging our women.' The conditions in India were not comfortable. Since 1858, the British had started ruling India with an iron fist. The police had been very insensitive towards the people and obeyed their masters, sometimes, with over-enthusiasm, to please them. A British official William Edwards wrote in 1859 that 'police were scourge to people'. He further added that 'their oppression and exactions form one of the chief grounds of dissatisfaction with our government.'[17] The trend continued and the things went from bad to worse. Bengal agitation in 1905, had attracted youth towards it and they were vehemently opposing the British Raj. The leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Chander Pal popularly known as Lal, Bal, Pal trio led the extremist movement. Aurobindo Ghosh was also supporting the movement and was in favour of extending the agitation to the whole of the country. He even kept open 'the option of violent resistance if British repression was stepped up.' Government had invoked regulation 3 of 1818 Act, whereby any person could be detained without trial if he was suspected of revolutionary activities. In Punjab there was a strong resentment against anti-peasant measures. Strong methods

were being adopted to curb the agitation and gag the voice of the nation. Lala Lajpat Rai, Sufi Amba Prasad and Sardar Ajit Singh from Punjab were deported for leading the agitation. Lal Chand Falak was sentenced for writing patriotic poems. Bhai Parmanand was arrested. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was deported to Mandley. Bepin Chander Pal was also forced to move out of the country. Aurobindo Ghosh left politics.

In response to Mr. Kennedy's question in House of Commons in 1909, the Master Elibank replied that the total number of persons sentenced to imprisonment in British India in five years ending 1907 was 785,857. The number of persons dealt with for the five years ending 1908 under Bengal regulation III of 1818 and other two modes of procedure is 22, eleven of these cases were connected with seditious movement against the British Government of which two were in May 1908, nine in December 1908.'[18]

The youth were getting restive. The Congress split in Surat had clearly demarcated the lines. The moderates were weakened and extremists were met with force. Totally leaderless, the youth of Bengal turned to revolutionary terrorism. In absence of any mass agitation they took to individual heroism.

In one of such acts two English women were killed by mistake at Muzafarpur in 1908, when a bomb was thrown on a carriage by Praful Chaki and Khudi Ram Bose. The real target escaped. Chaki shot himself dead. Khudi Ram was tried and hanged. Tilak issued a statement in defense of the act saying that 'the bomb had not been thrown because of hatred of any individual, or simply owing to the whim of an irresponsible madman. Even Khudi Ram, the bomb thrower, himself feels sorry that the innocent women of Mr. Kennedy's family fell victims instead of Mr. Kingsford. The young revolutionaries of Bengal, had adopted the tactics of the Russian anarchists not for the

sake of self-interest but owing to the exasperation produced by the autocratic exercise of power by the unrestrained and powerful white official class.'[19]

The administration was so insensitive and arrogant that it dealt with people's suffering in a very inhumane manner. For instance in 1897 plague spread from Bombay to Puna. Assistant Collector of Puna, Mr. Rand led the British plague officers to redeem the situation. He along with his team took immediate' and 'brutal' measures to control the outbreak. They started isolating people from infected areas in special camps. They destroyed the property believed to be contaminated. Even the people who were not infected were also taken away, 'clean' houses were pulled down. 'Rand and his fellow plague officers did not trouble to explain their actions, which the inhabitants of the city soon came to fear more than the plague itself.'[20]

It was a revealing example of a different kind of oppression that the masses were being subjected to, even though they were not involved in any kind of political activity. Sir Henry Cotton, MP, in a letter to Times, dated July 8, 1909, drew attention towards the 'individuals lying in prison without having been charged, and much less tried, for any offence. I and those with whom I am associated will continue through good and through evil repute in our campaign against this un-English and intolerable procedure in respect of British subjects.'[21] Dr. Rutherford, MP, speaking at Whitefield's Tebernacle said.... that the main cause of unrest in India was the fact that ours was an alien government and must come to an end. India must have Parliamentary institutions of her own.'[22]

Mr. Chidambram Pillay, leader of the movement in Madras, was also deported for life for making 'seditious speeches'. The judge at his trial declared that 'there was no lawful occasion, so far as he could see, for any man in the country to make a political speech.' The Anglo Indians were

happy. But Morley in London, who was in the process of drafting reforms for India, commented sadly, 'this explains bombs.'[23] Tilak, quoting Geeta, had opined that no blame could be attached to anyone who killed an oppressor without thought of reward.'

Dhingra was sounding the court of law, nay, the whole world in concluding paragraphs of his statement that 'Just as the Germans have no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India, and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill an Englishman, who is polluting our sacred land.

'In case this country is occupied by the Germans, and an Englishman, not bearing to see the Germans walking with the insolence of conquerors in the streets of London, goes and kills one or two Germans, then if that Englishman is to be held as a patriot by the people of this country, then, certainly, I am a patriot too - working for the emancipation of my Motherland.

'I make this statement not because I wish to plead for mercy or anything of that kind. I wish that the English people should sentence me to death, for in that case the vengeance of my countrymen will be all the keener.

'I put forward this statement to show the justice of my cause to the outside world.'

Curzon Wylie's killing had sent shock waves all around. The British Empire received a severe jolt. The act had put a question-mark on many a policies being pursued in India under British rule. The British rulers in India, as a race, used to assume that they are obeyed because they 'deserve obedience.' They, now, it seemed were forced to have come to think that they must 'secure obedience by granting concessions to the voices of clamour.'[24] Equally stirred was the Indian thought. Though the act of Dhingra

did not find any supporter, but the cause of freedom of India from British rule for which he sacrificed his life had many. The loyal supporters and collaborators of British Raj vied with each other to condemn the assassination and pray for the continuation of British Raj forever which in their opinion had come by the 'grace of God' and also to reaffirm their loyalty, gratitude and devotion to the Imperial Crown.

A 'protest meeting'[25] of Indians living in England was held at Caxton Hall under the chairmanship of His Highness Aga Khan. Prominent Indians including Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree, Sir Cowassi Jehangir, Syed Ameer Ali, R.N. Mooherjee, Mr. Bepin Chander Pal, Dr. Abdul Majid and Indian nobel men and Rajahs were present.

Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree, moved the resolution expressing horror and indignation at the crime. He said that 'In one fell moment an ill conditioned youth, by an act which was absolutely devoid of any extenuating circumstances whatsoever, had killed, he hoped not for all time that noble tradition of the Indian peoples, not only for loyalty but for peaceful pursuits and docility, and have also given - let him hope it was but temporary - a death blow to their largest aspirations which had been engaging the attention of British statesmen notably of Lord Morley, and of Indian peoples themselves. Was there anything in the power of the best orator to describe in fitting terms the results of that fatal blow ?……. Sayed Amir Ali Retd. Judge of High Court of Calcutta pleaded with politicians and publicists both in England and India to be careful in choosing the language they used in questioning the matters of State and British rule as it is likely to lead to frenzy or hatred on the part of hysterical youths.' Mr. Dube then moved: 'That this meeting considers it due to the British public to assure them that they deplore with feelings of humiliation an act of this heinous character, committed in

the metropolis of the British Empire, and begs that they will realize that it is the act of a fanatic or mad man which has aroused the deepest indignation of all the peoples of India……. The fact remained that there was a slur upon the character of Indians; they assembled there that day with a sense of humiliation. It would take time - a long time, perhaps before they would be able to efface completely the slur that has been cast upon them. All of them who came to England came for educational and other advantages for which they paid but they could never repay the kindness and courtesy they got from the people of this country. It was absolutely necessary from all points of view that they should assure the people of this country that they dissociated themselves from the crime.' RN Mookhrjee seconded.

Bepin Chander Pal moved, 'That this meeting offers its sincerest condolence and sympathy to the family of late Dr. Lalcaca, a distinguished gentleman of medical profession, whose untimely death it mourns with them. These tragedies were national disaster not on political grounds but on grounds of spirituality and religion. They struck at the root of nationalist ideal which had inspired them to put forth their efforts for the elevation of their countrymen, not merely politically but as a nation. The spirit of India was not an anarchical spirit. It was a spirit of order, a spirit of law. He wanted to add his voice in the name of the political school he represented against the fatal and irrational doctrine that murder was suppression. Murder was murder, call it by any name they pleased.'

Aga Khan spoke that 'we are meeting under the shadow not only of a personal and public bereavement but of a national disaster……We the Indians had it in our power to do to repair the ruin caused by that catastrophe (hear hear)…. By one terrible blow in a single fatal moment one of the best friends of our people was done to death in an

assemblage and amidst scenes illustrative of his sterling work. Then was swept away into oblivion all the noblest traditions of India, all the credit of her people for personal gratitude, loyalty, and devotion to the Imperial Crown. (hear hear). The humiliating sense of that discredit is still upon us, and we have met here this afternoon to see how we can rehabilitate ourselves among our fellow subjects of the Empire…..

'This happy trait of character (of Wylie) served the high imperial purpose of increasing the devoted affection our countrymen ever feel for the Crown which he represented.'

Replying to vote of thanks, he said, 'As Indian he felt that they had rendered a service to their community. Four thousand years before the name of Tolstoy was heard, Indian philosophers first started the theory of non - resistance, and he thought that great principle had done more really for the moral welfare of India than people realized. That any one who had been brought up on these ideas should have committed such a terrible act was a source of very great sorrow, but it carried with it the need of further studies, especially among the Indian youth, of the philosophy and literature of ancient India.'

Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, attended the Eighty Club meet[26] at Westminister Palace Hotel. The meeting was to discuss 'India' but turned out to be a condolence meeting. Many English MPs and Indians were present. Mr. Banerjee associated himself with the vote of condolence and proposed adjournment as a mark of respect to honoured dead. In a rare show of servility to English he declared that 'India was thoroughly loyal to British connection.' He continued that the Indians held this foul act of assassination with the utmost horror and detestation. Their religion, their traditions, their ideals, and their deep-seated convictions were all against acts of violence. The people of England would therefore realize the intensity of the horror, grief,

and indignation which the vast majority of Indians felt at the atrocious crime which had stirred up the civilized world. In India they made no distinctions between a murder committed as the result of some sordid desire and one committed in the frenzy of political passion. The activities of those who were opposed to true progress and liberty could not determine the course of Indian politics nor influence the state of Indian public opinion, which was towards orderly and peaceful development.'

In an extreme show of loyalty towards the British Raj's 'laboriously self-crafted image of 'Britain's Beneficence' he continued that 'the Indian problem could never be solved by the mischievous activities of a few fanatics, but only by the well considered movement of the great body of the people, who realized the inestimable blessings, which the paramountcy of Britain had conferred upon his native land. He confessed that there might be some persons outside their ranks who did not belong to any recognized political party. These were a danger to the Government and a danger to the Indians. This country could take an assurance from those who could speak with political authority that India was thoroughly loyal to the British connexion. To pause at the present juncture would be evidence of weakness, and would produce a most painful impression upon the public mind in India. The assassination had been a terrible blow to constitutional liberty in India, and they as Indians appealed to that meeting, as representative of the Liberal party, to come to their rescue in that hour of their crisis.'

New Reforms club meeting was presided over by Mr. SN Banerjee and later a press statement was issued by him to one of the English newspapers which made an appeal to Indian leaders to assist the government. Mr. Banerjee stated that 'I may say at once on behalf of the community I have the honour to represent, that we desire to accord a most cordial response. But Government must strengthen our

hands. If the government will not listen to our representations, if our persistent appeals are brushed aside contemptuously, as they have been, as unworthy of serious consideration - as in the matter of the modification of the partition of Bengal - what becomes of our influence and our power to help the government? We must have effective power before we can help the government at all, and I desire to impress this consideration on the mind of Lord Morley and British democracy who are, after all, the uncontrolled masters of our destinies.'[27]

The Times carried a report by its Bombay correspondent on July 6, 1909, related to a meeting addressed by Mr. Gopal Kishan Gokhle, a prominent Congress leader and known for his very intelligent and thorough speeches made during debates on budgets in the meetings of the Legislative Council of India. He addressed a condolence meeting held at Poona and remarked that 'London murders had blackened the Indian name. They must hang their heads down, shamed before civilized world. He appealed to the parents and guardians and the general public to cooperate with the government in dealing with students. . . . . .With reference to the idea of independence, none but lunatics could think or talk of such a thing in view of the endless divisions among Indians, their feeble public spirit, their general lack of energy and other grave defects of the national character.'

As if the self -derogatory speech was not enough, he further continued 'the political progress which might be achieved under British rule was practically unlimited. He did not think the goal of colonial self rule government unwise, but the average capacity required to be considerably raised before they could hope to bear the responsibility of any real measure of self-government.' The same paper published another comment sent by Calcutta correspondent wherein Mr. Gokhle, while speaking at Pune, further extended the thesis of loyalty to British that his

another colleague Mr. Banerjee had presented, by advocating that 'patriotism, which in other countries assume other forms, should in India lead to loyal cooperation with the British Government.' [28]

Condolence messages poured in from various parts of India. Sir Louis Dane in Punjab Legislative Council commented 'It is said that the assassin was a Punjabee but for the credit of its province I trust that this is not true. We have our differences in this province as elsewhere and as become in many races they state their views with freedom and even vehemence - a state of things which I for one welcome - but thank God, cowardly assassins of this type have been few in Punjab. It will be a grievous blot on the escutcheon of our province if a Punjabee has done this thing.'

Honorable Mohamed Shafi said he was sure the assassin in the recent outrage will be condemned by all in the Province and with all vehemence. The residents of Punjab are extremely conscious that cordial relations should exist between rulers and the ruled. Honorable Sardar Partap Singh followed, Mr. Harkishan Lal and Malik Umar Haiyat Khan also expressed abhorrence.

The Executive Committee of United Provinces Association, Allahabad, expressed its sincere sympathy with Lady Curzon Wylie and the family of Dr. Lalcaca. Public meetings of the residents of Meerut and Gorakhpur also condemned the killings. At Indore a public meeting was held under the auspices of the Bar Association and resolutions expressing indignation and disgust at the murders were passed.

The most significant responses were noticed from Maharajas of the princely states from India. In 1858, when all the parts of India were annexed by British and brought

under their rule, the Maharajas of princely states were an anomaly but not disturbed. In the eyes of British government 'they would serve as bulwarks against future revolt, obligated to the power that guaranteed their future.'[29] The British were right. Maharaja of Kashmir wrote to Civil and Military Gazette that 'the princes of India have not, and will not have any sympathy with Anarchists and their unprincipled and profane doings. If necessary, they will unstintedly place their resources at the disposal of the government in stamping out Anarchism.'

Mr. Pertap Singh, Major General, Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir wrote a letter to the Editor of *Times.* It smacked of extreme kind of sycophancy. After repudiating the incident on social and religious grounds he moved on to condemn it politically saying 'If I may venture to say so, politically speaking such a course of conduct, instead of doing any good, is calculated to involve the people's welfare. The merciful Providence, in His Divine dispensation, has placed India under the benign protection and government of the British Throne and has thus saved it from these internecine struggles which marked the history of the *ante*-British rules and which would otherwise have doomed its people of heterogeneous castes and creeds to inevitable destruction. To the British we must, therefore, look for a helping and guiding hand for the regeneration of the country, and we must do all that lies in our power to cooperate with them in their noble work in this direction. In doing so, we may, by constitutional means, reasonably approach them for the redress of our grievances and lay before them our own demands : but when these means are perverted into a sort of crusade against their personal safety, they cannot but be denounced as highly culpable and mischievous.

'To my mind anarchism is based upon a short-sighted policy. It can scarcely affect the stability of the corporate

body of the British Government, grounded as it is upon the rocky foundations of justice and deeply embedded as it is in the affections of the people, but the course will certainly prejudice the people's interest. It is, however, satisfactory to find that Indian spirit of loyalty and patriotism is quite opposed to this nefarious doctrine and regards Madan Lal's flagrant outrage as an individual act. Let every sane Indian who has the welfare of the country at heart try, by example and percept, to disillusion similar fantasies of their mistaken views and save others from catching the infection.'[30]

The Master of Elibank, while answering a question, by Mr. Rees, in the House of Commons, stated that 'the seditionists made efforts to excite disloyalty to the British Government in Gwalior, but his Highness the Maharajah, Scindia, who, as the House is aware, is one of the most important, loyal, and efficient of Indian Princes, at once took effective steps to cope with the situation. Thirty-nine persons have recently been tried by Courts of the Gwalior State, apparently as members of secret society in Gwalior engaged in a conspiracy to use criminal force. Of these, 33 were sentenced…to various terms of imprisonment ranging from seven years to three months, two were pardoned and four acquitted.'[31]

Maharaja Scindia, whose 'striking personality' carried 'exceptional weight with all the ruling chiefs of India' issued an order in his State that 'any one who seeks to subvert the Government of His Majesty in India - a government which is supremely humane and just, and which was, I have no doubt, ordained by Providence to bring happiness and prosperity to all His Majesty's Indian subjects - is in my eyes at once a contemptible ingrate and a traitor to his own country. I take this opportunity of emphasizing for the special guidance of the students of my schools and colleges that the expenditure which my government is incurring from year to year on their education is not intended to train

them into discontented and objectionable members of society. I will tolerate no form of sedition or disloyalty in my State, and will suppress with a stern hand all who offend against my laws.'[32] He also issued some instructions which prohibited certain 'seditious native newspapers.' Maharaja Scindia also made subscription to the Curzon Wylie's Memorial to the worth of £61.

Another Maharaja, of Jaipur, also issued an order against 'sedition' which included a series of regulations for prosecuting and punishing the preaching of sedition' either in a lecture at any gathering, public or private, in a song or in conversation, or in any written paper, and the publication, importation and circulation, publicly or privately, of seditious newspapers.'[33] Majisaheba of Bharatpur also contributed £ 31 to Wylie's Memorial.[34]

The times of Dhingra and the later times had their share of the people who were loyal to their own interests and none else. As one of the articles in Swaraj published in June 16, 1909 puts that 'the Chrysalis stage of scoundrel-patriot is the self seeking loyalist, the man who sells his country for a post under the government or a retainer in Crown cases, or for the more refined bribe of an honorary title. *Those who turn loyalist today because it pays them to do so, will turn patriot tomorrow should patriotism pay them more later on.*' The men will judge it. History will decide it. Generations will learn.

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An interesting incident took place in a protest meeting that was held in Caxton Hall. When the chairman put the resolution to vote a young Indian in the Hall rose and declared himself against it. People turned round to see the interrupter, and Sir M. Bhownagree called out, 'Is he against the resolution?' On being answered in affirmative, Sir Bhownagree Mancherjee shouted, 'then turn him out.' There

was scene of wild confusion for a moment, and at least one head was broken by a blow from a walking stick wielded by a sympathiser dissentient standing on a form by the side of the room. The interrupter was ejected and taken charge of by the police. The evictor, bleeding profusely, addressed the meeting, saying he would have faced a bullet rather than allow the interrupter to remain in the room.[35] The dissentient was Mr. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. The evictor was one Palmer, an Anglo Indian from Hyderabad.

Savarkar sent a letter to the Editor of The Times in reference to the incident quoted above to clarify the confusion and to prevent his attitude from being misinterpreted. He wrote 'the fact is that, when the president put the resolution before the meeting and asked those in favour of the same to raise their hands, he acknowledged the right in accordance with the invariable practice in all public meetings of every one who was present to vote according to his choice. The resolution was explained by those who proposed and seconded it so as to presume the criminality of the man who is accused of having committed the murder. It seemed to me an encroachment upon and assumption of authority of law courts to declare a man who is still under trial to be a criminal. The man accused of murder has made no confession. So it seemed to me more just and appropriate to omit the words 'crime' and 'criminal' from the resolution. As the proceedings had advanced too far to effect this, I simply voted against the resolution as it stood and wanted to bring to the notice of the president the fact that the resolution could not be declared as passed unanimously. I was perfectly within my right as a voter, and the only proper way for the president was to count the votes against and for and declare the result. But some exited spirits forgot themselves so much as to shout 'eject him'. & c., and even went so far as to threaten me with physical force. I stood perfectly calm, simply asserting my right and

without giving the least provocation. In a minute or two one man, Mr. Palmer by name, reached to the place where I was standing and attacked me while I was actually in the act of explaining the meaning of my opposition in clear terms, though they were drowned in the cry of the excited few. The man who committed this unprovoked assault upon one who simply insisted upon either being heard or ejected will soon be brought before the courts.'[36]

The very next day on July 6, another letter was published in the paper written by Mr. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, who supported Savarkar saying 'I have read with much satisfaction Mr. V.D. Savarkar's letter in today's issue of *The Times*. Being detained by urgent business, I was unable to be present at the protest meeting held yesterday in Caxton Hall. But it was my intention to proceed there, and in event of Mr. M.L. Dhingra's criminality being assumed by the supporters of the resolution, to enter an emphatic protest. I am glad that this was done by Mr. Savarkar. Had I been present, I would have supported him at the risk of being ejected, and there would have been two dissentient voices raised against the resolution.

'In saying this I do not express any sympathy with assassination. In my opinion the programme of the terrorists is an absolutely suicidal one. But I think we all have the right to express our opinions honestly, and if we take objection to words of resolution, I see no reason why force should be used to expel us.

'There is no one who feels more deeply than I do the effect of political assassination upon the progress of the nationalist movement. But, anxious as I am to see 'anarchism' obliterated from my country, I can not conscientiously help the British Government to suppress it, as I am firmly convinced, as every Nationalist is, that their whole policy is wrong and is calculated to produce no other

result than it has already done. You, Sir, have always advocated repression and coercion, and the vast majority of your countrymen accept this as the only method of continuing to rule India. But coercion will drive India headlong into destruction and, if you still believe you are there in the interests of humanity, you will be disillusioned earlier than you think. The catalogue of coming assassinations will probably be a long one, and the responsibility for its length will have to be laid at the doors of those who, instead of espousing the cause of Indian freedom, wish to hold India in the interests of Britain.'[37] It was indeed a very bold letter.

The press was very suspicious of the leaders who even genuinely felt sad on the murder as the method used by Dhingra did not correspond to their way of thinking. The press accepted the honesty of those only, who conformed with the British policy, good or bad. It treated others with contempt. Savarkar's letter provoked a retort from a correspondent in the Times under the title 'The Extremist Attitude'.[38] The correspondent wrote that Mr. Savarkar's letter..... stating that he voted against the resolution……. because it presumed the criminality of the youth arrested in the very deed, carries its own condemnation.' He drew the attention of the readers to the address from where Savarkar wrote. 140, Sinclair Road, was the office of the fortnightly journal titled *Swaraj* an 'organ' of Indian Nationalism edited by 'Shrijut' Bepin Chander Pal, and made it smell fishy and seditious against the interests of the British. He referred to the content of *Swaraj* where the prospectus of 'The Hind Nationalist Agency' and the list of objects of agency was written. It also included a statement signed by Mr. Bepin Chander Pal and Mr. G.S. Kaparde. It read as 'during the present year there have been many significant occurrences in our country, and it is becoming increasingly manifest that the Indian Nationalist Party,

though it has suffered heavily by the exile or incarceration of its leaders, has been steadily gaining ground, and has already become a very powerful factor in shaping and determining the destinies of India. But the attitude of the British Government has made it almost impossible to conduct even an honest Nationalist Journal in India, while the suppression of our leading organs, such as *Bande Matram,* has left a great gap which must be filled. It has, therefore, become eminently necessary that a journal should be published from Europe or America in the interest of Indian Nationalism, and we think this an exceedingly opportune moment because we have among us here in England not only many well known Nationalists, but one man in particular who has rendered conspicuous and meritorious service in the Nationalist cause. It is proposed to form a limited liability company, called the Hind Nationalist Agency (Limited).' The prospectus was signed by V. Chattopadhya described as the Provisional Honorary Secretary. The correspondent indicated that the person with 'meritorious' service was Bepin Chander Pal. He further objected to the language employed by the agitators which he believed was calculated to produce an effect on the impressionable young men. Such people only act in the violent manner.' He wondered how could English opinion accept the condemnation of the political assassination done by such leaders.

Bepin Chander Pal took notice of the report by an anonymous correspondent and replied back very candidly. He argued that 'If to condemn official repression which has been the psychological cause and origin of the various acts of violence in Bengal, be a crime, I plead guilty to act and challenge to be brought to trial for it.' Bepin Chander stood for whatever and whenever he spoke or wrote. He took a dig on an Indian judge who proscribed his 'photo as seditious but the original stands un-condemned.'

Taking a strong exception to the unethical act of the correspondent in suppressing the information to prove a point, Bepin Chander reproduced the statement of policy published in the journal. 'The political ideal of Indian Nationalism has always been to work out a peaceful change in the constitution of the State-organization in India, with a view to help the people to realize their divinely appointed destiny as a free nation among the free nations of the world. It is an essentially spiritual and humanitarian ideal. It is the desire of the spirit of composite Indian Nation to come to its own. It implies no enmity to any other people or country. The sporadic outbursts of violence in Bengal that have attracted excessive attention during the past year do in no way represent either the true ideal or the actual methods of Indian Nationalism. These never had the support of leaders of the movement, but were due entirely to repressive acts of Indian executive. The Nationalist leaders in India have always recognized the futility of political assassination as an instrument for the attainment of popular freedom. It may bring about a change of despots, but has never in any part of the world achieved popular freedom. The avowed methods of Indian Nationalism therefore have been the peaceful method of passive resistance.'

In order to make his stand clear on political assassination and freedom of the country he recorded that he sincerely regretted the political violence. 'It retards the progress of the cause and recklessly increases the cost of National freedom in India. Political freedom is valuable, not for itself, but for those opportunities of self-realization, in every sense of the term, which it offers. The spiritual life is the truest life; politics and economics, art and literature, commerce and industry - all these are only contributory to it ; and their value and significance are not in them, but in their capacity to help the development of this spiritual life

But not only do we condemn these on the higher grounds of ethics and religion but consider them even as suicidal to the cause of real National freedom'. He further emphasized that 'those who are pursuing this method of counter-violence do not seem to realize the risks that their acts involved to the political future of the Nation . Either they will succeed or they will fail. And, what, if they succeed ? They make the Government impossible. But to make the administration impossible by peaceful passive resistance is one thing and to make it impossible by breaking it up is another. In the former case popular freedom is secured by strictly constitutional methods; in the later case, the country must pass through a period of military ascendancy, which in view of the disorganized condition of the general civil populations of Indian at the present time can only mean for us a military dictatorship. In other words, a National autocracy, either Hindu or Mohemden and more likely Mohemden than Hindu, will, if these attempts ultimately succeed, supplant the existing British bureaucracy. And that would mean another fiercer struggle, later on, for popular freedom in India - a struggle that will be immeasurably keener and more bitter than we have as yet ever known. This is the risk of success of this campaign of political violence. If it does not succeed, it will mean greater and deeper demoralization of the people and the total ruin of the little work that has already been done in the way of quickening a new national life in them. In either case, thus, the risks of this propaganda are very great ; and no statesmanship would lend its support to it.'

Snubbing the people doubting the sincerity of pronouncements made by him he commented that 'my utterances on this assassination have been prompted by a sense of public duty. My God ordered me to speak and I have spoken. I do not care as to who accepts my sincerity and who does not. I am not a politician. I was asked by a

Press representative the other day whether this assassination was not exceedingly deplorable as likely to alienate British sympathies from Indian reformers. My reply was - 'I do not care a pin about British sympathies or antipathies. I would condemn it even if the whole British nation approved of it. I condemn it because it is wrong. I condemn it with God, and I would do so against all the world.'[39] Here we could find a refreshing instance of upright, dignified and honourable discourse in the jungle of loyalists devoid of self respect and national pride.

Equally emphatic was Chattopadhyaya's response. He said 'I cannot imagine anything so grotesquely ignorant as the suggestion that Bepin Chander Pal of all people, is to be connected even remotely with the recent outrage. It is notorious that he has no place whatsoever in the councils of those who advocate violence, though I do not share his old-world optimism as regards a 'peaceful revolution.'

Referring to the prospectus of Hind Nationalist Agency he said that he drew up the prospectus with the sanction of Mr. Khaparde and Mr. Pal. Hinting towards the taunting doubt expressed on account of services rendered by Pal he said 'It is not to be expected, when we speak of services rendered to the Nationalist cause by any leading man, that the British Government will consider them as 'services' also. But that is just where the conflict lies; we do not accept as crime every act, which our foreign rulers in their own interests choose to call a crime. It is no crime, for instance to boycott British goods or the British service, or the British ideas, or British men (and women). It is no crime to produce a moral and mental attitude in the peoples of India which will deprive our rulers of their moral support. And so long as we allow ourselves to hurt or kill no one, and to create no breach of the peace, we are justified in carrying on our work of bringing about such a cooperation among the people of India as shall render the further existence of the British Government unnecessary.'[40]

The press castigated even S.N. Banerjee, who otherwise aired his views on loyalty and praised the British rule, the moment he took opportunity to point out the mistakes committed by British. It was not tolerated by the English opinion. In a meeting Mr. Banerjee commented that 'if the British Government had the spirit of statesman-like sympathy then it would not have found itself face to face with the unrest and excitement and all that it implied. For the unrest Government was largely responsible.' Referring to Asian uprising he counselled, 'in dealing with unrest, the Asiatic situation had to be remembered. The victories of Japan over Russia had enormously added to the self-respect of Asiatic Nations, and had intensified their national self-consciousness. A great wave was sweeping through Asia bearing on its crest high ideals and aspirations. India felt the full impact of this wave.' He appealed to the British 'to put an end to the system of deportation without trial and other repressive measures, and to modify the partition of Bengal, and thus to vindicate the character of British Government for readiness to do what was right when it was seen that mistake has been made.'[41] This was not liked by the press and Banerjee's reported statement in New Forms Club, where he had while condemning the killing, asked the British Government to listen to the genuine demands of the people and this would 'strengthen' their hands came under sharp attack. The press commented that 'Mr. Banerjee's zeal for prevention of assassination and the repression of anarchy depends upon the Government's accepting his own views of the right mode of Governing India. In short his denunciation of assassination reads like a veiled threat.' The British in fact hated Indians and teased them out to make more salutatory statements and also prove their sayings by some actions as the English deemed fit. One such comment in Times read 'If the Nationalists in India act up to the professions made….. and

strenuously exert their undoubted influence to discourage the gospel of sedition and violence, to bring those who preach it and who practice it to justice, and to check all attempts to condone their crimes or to hold them up as martyrs, we shall put faith in the assurances we receive that no underground links exist between the open and secret movements.' [42]

The English people seemed to be the victims of praising themselves, even out of proportions. They have been very vocal of their restraint and cool reactions in the times of disasters. They even did not forget to pat their backs on showing a great sang-froid on the killing of Wylie. A report said 'the self-restraint and even generosity with which English opinion has expressed itself on this disastrous crime has been truly in keeping with the character of the English people as an imperial race.'[43]

But how could they explain the statement of Attorney General, made in the House of Commons while answering to Earl Winterton's question which refuted their claims. He had said 'the limits of free speech vary according to the temperaments of different peoples. It does no great harm when an anarchist splutters revolution in a London Park. His hearers may applaud, but it is quite certain that they will not follow his advice. The character of British renders incitement to violence comparatively innocuous. But the Indian is not British. Deluded by lying prophets, incited by ingenious demagogues, he may easily become ferocious in action and entirely indifferent to consequences. Despite Lord Macauley's education scheme, the Asiatic is still Asiatic. He may study Herbert Spencer, but it is the spirit of the East that inspires his actions. It is therefore necessary to protect the young Indians from men who would only make young English men jeer.[44] No statement could be more outrageous and insulting.

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Shyamji Krishan Verma and his journal Indian Sociologist were condemned to be the main culprits. Shyamji Krishan Verma was living in Paris and was among the pioneers in opening India House at London. On knowing the incident at Paris he sent a few words to Daily Mail on 3rd July. He strongly condemned the crime and said 'my writings will show that I have never had any quarrel with the English in their own country or with Law in England…….. The advocacy of physical force was never part of my programme so long as free agitation was allowed in India, but every fresh measure of British aggression and repression such as the restriction of the liberty of Press, freedom of speech, and the right of public meeting, imposes on every Indian patriot the duty of counteracting the efforts of the alien British despotism by employing all such means as may advance the cause of Indian independence.'

He further said 'we cannot be fastidious as to the methods by which that cause may be promoted. We will not say we should use dynamite or the knife or the rifle or parliamentary agitation. We must use all and every methods as opportunity presents itself. I knew Sir Curzon Wylie personally, worked under him for several years and admired him as the best type of British administrator in India. I, therefore, extremely regret his assassination. I fear the result will be to limit the privileges of Indian students in England. It may possibly stop their studying there and provoke still more repressive measures against Indian patriots. I have no desire to brave the laws of England which is a free country, as opposed to British India which is under despotic rule, and whose laws I regard as null and void, as they are made by the British and not the Indian themselves.'[45]

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Dhingra was executed on August 17, 1909 at the prime of his youth. It was the first such political hanging that

stirred the whole nation. It was after he had laid down his life the simmering feelings of patriotism flared up. It contributed to the growth of Nationalism in India. The entire history of freedom movement thereafter has the bearing of this sacrifice. With all his humility and devotion to the Motherland he had written :

Poor in health and intellect, a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the mother but his own blood. And so I have sacrificed the same on her altar. The only lesson required in India at present is to learn how to die, and the only way to teach it is by dying ourselves. My only prayer to God is that I may be reborn of the same mother and I may re-die in the same sacred cause till the cause is successful. Bande Matram!

A historian has opined that the revolutionaries 'gave us back the pride of our manhood'.[46] Madan Lal Dhingra was one of such glaring examples of courage and sacrifice and he stands out tallest of all.

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THE EPISODE FROM AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF GIANI KESAR SINGH

(In Punjabi)

Before leaving India in 1957, I paid a visit to the veteran Ghadrite Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna. I was accompanied by my friend Principal Sujan Singh who was then working as Headmaster in the school the Baba got started in his native village Bhakna (District Amritsar). The Baba had with him my English book "Indian Independence Movement in East Asia". While holding the book in both hands he got emotional and said, "What the crusaders of Ghadar Party had done for the cause of freedom was not even contemplated by any other party. Yet no one had bothered to write about it. Whatever little had been written is slipshod. Since you are going to London, do justice to the sacrifices of Ghadrites. Now that you are getting a chance to do it, in case you don't do so, who else would?"

I heard Baba's words with rapt attention. The moment we departed, my friend Sujan said, "My boy gird up your loins. You have made a commitment to Baba, you must fulfill it."

During the days of martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and his comrades I was at Amritsar. One of the speakers who addressed a procession had alluded to the martyrdom of Madan Lal Dhingra at London. A few days later, while standing before his ancestral 'Dhingra House' (at Amritsar), some of us were contemplating on the marvel of the youngman in having boldly killed a British high official and gladly embraced martyrdom!

So before leaving for London, I had made up my mind to give top priority to discovering material about the martyrdom of Madan Lal Dhingra and Udham Singh and writing books on them.

The moment I landed in London, I felt an irresistible urge to find some mode of laying hands on the material. I was able to elicit something about Udham Singh since there were some persons who knew him personally. But very little was known about his trial proceedings since none of his friends had been allowed entry in the court.

I tried my best to find out some source material on the martyrs in the libraries of London but of no avail. One day someone told me that the records of such like (political murder) cases were kep secret and were thrown open after fifty years had elapsed. As for Dhingra's martyrdom, 49 years had gone by but no clue could be got about his record either.

As and when I found time I would be going to Kensigton Garden for a stroll. One day I was just passively watching an old British lady feeding sparrows with small crusts of bread. All of a sudden an old gentleman came and got seated besides me. Fondling with my flowing black beard he said "Sai Sri Akal" (Sikh greetings) to me. I got up and shook hands with him. Instantly he opened up :-

"I had been the Chief Justice of Lahore High Court. All eminent Sardars of Punjab were my friends. Somehow I enjoyed the companionship of Sikhs. Of them one Sardar in particular I held in high esteem. May I narrate to you something unique about him if you have time?" He paused a bit and then told me that this Sardar was one Sardar Harbans Singh of Attari. He had been appointed Honorary

Magistrate but gave it up soon after simply because he thought that it was not his cup of tea when almost all respectables vied for this assignment.

He then introduced me to that old lady "She is my wife." When I told him that same very Sardar (Harbans Singh) was my Guru under whose guidance I acquired education for three years at Amritsar Orphanage he was really thrilled. Promising each other to meet next evening we parted.

All through the intervening night the only thought that kept on haunting me was perhaps this former Chief Justice may help me in my search. It would be then followed by a counter suggestion that possibly in his eyes, killer of a British officer (Dhingra) and another killer of a British Governor (Udham Singh) would be criminals. Whom we regard martyrs, may well be the object of detestation for others!

While lost in the clash between the conflicting waves of thoughts I reached the meeting point V-12 Kensington Garden next evening. He was already there waiting for me. I, first, touching his feet, shook hands with him. He had a laugh. Having taken my seat besides him I began:-

"Your friend Sardar Harbans Singh was my Guru. I learnt Sikh scriptures from him. During my three year stay in orphanage in Amritsar I learnt music. He had been captain of Punjab football team. He initiated me into the game as well. He had got a pair of football shoes especially stitched for me".

He interrupted me here to say that "once I saw a football match in Lahore between teams of England and that of Punjab. This Sardar stood like a rock and scuttled all the moves of the rival team. Infuriated, their captain prompted one of his players to damage the leg of Sardar, which he did fracturing his ankle. The undaunted Sardar

persisted in his endeavours ultimately leading his team to victory." The gentleman had in fact narrated an eyewitness account of the match what I had once heard from Sardarji.

Now, I was waiting breathlessly for him to conclude so that I could resume my pleading. He had just paused that I stole the opportunity to say "A Punjabi student Madal Lal Dhingra was hanged in 1909 for having killed Sir Curzon Wylie." He reacted by saying that he had completed his Bar at Law then. Then I resumed "A similar episode of killing took place in 1940; Udham Singh had shot dead Sir Michael O'Dwyer." Again he butted in "At the time of Jallianwala firing I was at Mianwali. When O'Dwyer was killed I was Chief Justice of Lahore High Court."

"I intend writing about these two episodes after accessing the needed sources." said I

"It would indeed be a hazardous venture" he retorted. After a little pause, and possible upon some reflection he muttered "yes of course now that India is free; even if you don't do it, some one else would, sooner or later."

I disclosed to him my emotional bond with Udham Singh- that it was the same orphanage where we both orphans studied. I stayed there for three years from 1927 to 1930. Udham Singh had preceeded me by a decade or so. He had rendered the service of providing water to those injured on 13th April, 1919. I feel much for him. I must write his case history, but cannot find requisite material in any library."

"You seem to be up to a mischief ! Yet I will help you. You had been a ward of my dear friend, Harbans Singh…….. I somehow see in you his visage."

Next day when we met he said' "Since you seem determined to accomplish this project, you do one thing…… Take admission for Bar-at-Law. When you would be armed with the identity card of a student, you will have unhindered access to the source materials, and

you shall be able to realize your dream. You come to me tomorrow with three photographs of yours. You shall fill up the prescribed form and I shall get you admission in *Grays*' Inn for Bar-at-Law. You will have to pay 100 pounds as the entrance fee"

Accordingly next day I landed at his residence with photographs and the fee. Instantly he phoned the head clerk of Grays' Inn, called him there and handed over to him my application form and the money. Being his own discretion, he had inscribed "specialization in criminal Law" on the form.

A few days thence, I got the admission papers besides the identity card.

On the very next day I stormed into the Criminal Record office at 9.00 a.m. sharp. I sent a chit inside mentioning that I desired to see the case record of Madan Lal Dhingra.

"No case record of this title is available in this office," came the reply.

Some how upon my insistence, he permitted me to enter the office. Then on his own he placed the record register of criminal cases before me. When I perused the list of those hanged in 1909, I found the name of Madan Lal Dhingra at the top. Also the date of execution was inscribed as being 17th of August, 1909. I got up and sought the case file. The clerk, with some reluctance though, handed over the file to me.

It consisted of 15 pages. By 5.00 p.m. I had copied it word by word…. My joy knew no bounds. That day I even forgot to visit Kensington Garden. I spent another 3-4 days in scrutinizing the file over and over again. In a separate note book I made out chronological sequence of events.

One of these days, I went and stood before the house where Dhingra had stayed as a tenant-and from where he got ready to kill Sir Curzon Wylie. I felt as if just now

Dhingra would emerge to receive me…..! I traversed the path back to my house on foot. I felt as if I was moving in ethereal world!

At noon, the same day I stood before that Pentovile Jail where Madan was hanged… Then I learnt that the mortal remains of the Martyr continue to lie buried in some remote corner of the Jail.

(Excerpted/ translated from autobiography of Gyani Kesar Singh in Punjabi published by LOKGEET PARKASHAN, S.C.O. 2427-28 Sector 22-C, Chandigarh: 2001, Pages 171-75)

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